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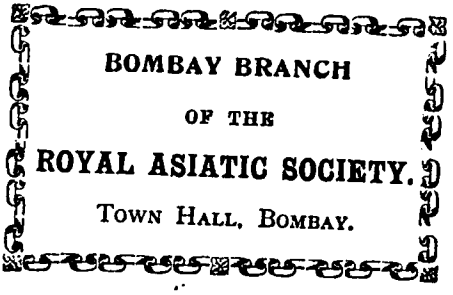

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RHEINSBERG:

MEMORIALS OF FREDERICK THE GREAT

AND

PRINCE HENRY OF PRUSSIA.

Urbs Remimontis sita in sylvis, pascuis, montibus, vallibus, lacubus, loco longe amœnissimo . . . .

Miscellanea Lipsiensia, 1717.

RHEINSBERG:

MEMORIALS OF FREDERICK THE GREAT

AND

PRINCE HENRY OF PRUSSIA.

23524 a

By ANDREW HAMILTON.

IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

RHEINSBERG is not a well-known name in England. Readers of the History of Frederick the Great, hastening to the prodigious narrative of his reign, are apt to pass lightly over the record of the quiet years which followed on the catastrophe of his attempted flight; perhaps they even lose sight of Frederick altogether during the four years of retirement and study and cheerful seclusion—the four years of what he himself called his 'Tranquillity'—which immediately preceded his Accession. The place in which he spent those years, lying, as it does, in a part of Europe unknown, and indeed inaccessible, to the general traveller, has not had the chance given it of reviving vague impressions on its own account by putting its name forward in the tables of the Handbooks. The Mark of Brandenburg is not one of the playgrounds of Europe, or even of Germany. Its natural features—endless pine-forests and number-

less lakes set in a seemingly boundless waste of yellow sand—have never been found attractive. It possesses hardly any of the modern means of locomotion. Its green spots are known, rather by hearsay than by observation, to a very few persons.

Sundry excursions of my own have proved to me, not merely that the Mark is very rich in historical associations, but that many of the green spots just alluded to are extremely pretty.

During my first visit to Rheinsberg I kept a journal, which has been made use of in the descriptive parts of this book. A later visit, paid since the book was begun, is, I think, only once alluded to.

What I have said of Frederick the Great and Prince Henry and their Courts, might have been spun out to ten times the actual length. For a purpose like the present one, it has been necessary to retrench and abridge on every side. I am conscious of having been mindful, possibly too mindful, of Voltaire's axiom, approvingly quoted by Frederick in a Rheinsberg letter,—

'Le secret d'ennuyer est celui de tout dire.'

In all (or nearly all) instances the authorities are referred to.

The main difficulty in the way of any one in our day approaching ever so circuitously even a brief

episode in the life of Frederick the Great, is the recent History of Frederick by the greatest of living English writers. In the shadow thrown by so goodly a monument, the modest aims of an after-comer are apt to escape notice. If seen, they run the risk of being thought forward or foolhardy. Yet I think most persons would like myself rather glean where Mr. Carlyle has reaped now than later; whilst he is within reach of our hearty thanks, and his honoured and beloved name is still heard in the midst of us.

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RHEINSBERG.

CHAPTER I.

ARRIVAL.

The *Rathskeller*—The Market-Place—The House—The Lake—The Rhin—The Gardens—Proserpina and Daphne, and the Four Elements—The Obelisk—The Temple of Friendship—*In piam Memoriam*—The Lake of Boberow—First evening in Rheinsberg.

It was good fun to start from Berlin in the year 1872 by mail-coach. Late in a hot evening in the beginning of July to drive, not like the other cabs to some crowded railway station in a suburb, but down into the heart of the sultry city, past the *Schloss*, and across the *Lange Brücke*, and along the *Königsstrasse* to the General Post Office. There in an inner yard a diligence had been pulled out to wait for horses and passengers. Having come early to secure a good seat, I paced up and down the *Spandauerstrasse*, where only here and there a late straggler was hurrying to his home. The rest of the *Königsstadt* was quiet enough. At eleven o'clock the Ruppin mail jolted on its way, the

conductor and myself in the *coupé;* one other passenger, I believe, in the interior.*

The night was dark. I talked to the conductor about the falling off in mail-coach travelling, and he replied to me at some length, without manifesting any annoyance. As we drove past the stables in the *Oranienburgerstrasse,* he told me calmly of the hundreds of horses that had once been kept there for staging purposes. He himself, I found, was a conductor, not by divine right, but by the will of man. Like every Prussian official, he did what he believed to be his duty conscientiously and with a stiff callous show of responsibility, but, so far as I know, without glorying in his profession any more than if he had been a calico-printer or a stock-broker. He had nothing, not even the name, in common with those excited figures of our own High Flyer days, many tippeted and much tipped, who were called guards, and who would, and did, glory in the road. After all, he could not glory in five old coaches. He sat in his long uniform in the corner of the *coupé,* very much, to all appearance,

* By the 'Post and Railway Guide' I found that five mail coaches still continued to run—or rather labour in the sandy thoroughfares — between Berlin and some neighbouring towns and villages in the by-ways of the Mark of Brandenburg; places overleaped by modern civilization and too insignificant, or situated in districts too sterile, to be within reach of any actual or intended railway. The service for passengers in our day is an odd survival of what was once an august institution. In most places the department has been swept away; in Berlin it is in the extremity of attenuation.

as other generations of conductors might have sat there before him,—and would sit, no doubt, to the bitter end.

After a while he told me a sad but not a strange tale. The campaign had taken his son from him—his only child—'such a fine fellow, who had never given father or mother a moment's uneasiness, but had been so steady and had just got such a capital situation as head waiter in the Hôtel ——' His wife and himself had nothing to care for now, nor did they care for anything,—'it was all the same.' They were glad they had seen the boy before he died. He had lived four weeks after his coming home, and then, &c., &c.—'I can tell you, I have never had a happy hour since,' &c.

I daresay we passed Tegel in the dark, and the graves of the Humboldts. Some fragments of sleep helped to while away the night, and in the morning, about five o'clock, we reached the village of Herzberg, where the coach dropped me and went on its further way to New Ruppin. I had decided on going straight to Rheinsberg, and on trusting entirely to the public conveyances. So, after that I had lounged about for a good hour in the early sunshine and read the inscriptions in the village churchyard, an omnibus came out from under a shed and picked me up. It was made entirely of hard deal boards, panes of glass, and oil paint. Inside of it I found a man and two big ill-bred boys. For three hours more the omnibus dragged

us, through sandy roads and sultry pine-forests and one little white hot market town called Lindow, roughly to our journey's end.

The entrance to Rheinsberg on this side is as modest and unpretending as possible. The traveller sees a low-built house on his left-hand a little way back from the road and at wrong angles with it, and whilst he is looking at it listlessly and beginning to observe a haystack at the one end of it, he sees two houses on his right, and then some more on his left, and finds that he is in a clean wide street; and in one minute more he is put down at the *Rathskeller*, which is the largest inn in the place and ought to be the best one.

Having read Fontane's charming book,* I was prepared to like the *Rathskeller*, and I tried not to mind the dirt that met the eye. I hoped that cleanliness was only being kept out of sight for a season, to be the more tenderly cared for in secret; but still I thought it a pity that the stairs were never either scrubbed or swept. I was led up into the largest room in the house. It was a corner room, with windows on two sides looking out on splendid old trees. I wondered whether I should be able to make myself comfortable there for a while. There was a bed in a far corner. Between two of the four windows there was a perfectly ruinous sofa, and in front of that there was a table

* *Wanderungen durch die Mark Brandenburg.* Von Theodor Fontane. Drei Theile. Berlin. 1865—73.

with a cover which had once been white, now quite loathsome with stains and filth. Otherwise, but for a washing-stand and a chair or two, the huge room was empty. The walls were plastered with that pale crumbling pink which will fly at the elbows and cuffs of a town-made coat from almost any distance. The atmosphere was mouldy beyond breathing. I made a draught by opening the windows and placing chairs before them to keep them from closing again, but I knew very well that no mere current of air, however sweet and pure and full of the fragrance of green leaves, would chase away the foulness in my time.

The last time that Rheinsberg was burned down was in 1740. It bears all the marks of having been built quickly on a uniform plan. For a town of little more than two thousand inhabitants, it covers a great deal of ground. The streets are very wide, and the houses very low, in most cases only a ground-floor with attics. The large square into which the *Rathskeller* looks sideways, and the three-cornered plot in front, were planted about the middle of the last century with rows of limes and horse-chestnuts that are now gigantic and impenetrable. Towering to the height of from eighty to a hundred feet, they make the houses look even lower than they really are,—dwarfed to the size of booths in a fair—and almost uninhabitably dark. Some younger trees have been planted nearer the centre of the square. This square is called the

Market-Place, but it is many a day, I believe, since either market or fair was held in it. It is wide and long and perfectly deserted, neither man nor beast going that way or crossing it very often. Placed quite in one corner of the town, or rather between town and palace, it must have been a thoroughfare when the palace was tenanted, but it lies quite aside from any movements of life in the town itself. At the first sight of it as it is now in a forenoon in July, sunny, shady, grassy, dusty, untidy, uncared-for, and quite empty, save for its forest-trees and the long cobwebs that link the big boughs to the little ones, with its slumbers of a hundred years and the likelihood of broken crockery in its sheltered corners, it is just the place to enchant the tourist who is tired of modern watering-places and well-dressed promenades, and even make him feel within him some sober stirrings of thankfulness.

After some coffee I went out and at once made for the *Schloss*, which stands at an angle with the inn, only a few hundred yards off. Built on low ground, under the level of the town, it makes on this side but little show. The entrance to the precincts is between two outbuildings, the *Cavalierhaus* and the stables, each of which faces one whole side or front of the principal building. A wooden paling connects these two *dépendances*, and in the middle of the paling is a wooden gate, which was

out of repair. From the gate the road leads straight down to the chief entrance. The moat at that point is crossed by a wooden bridge. The water in the moat was clear and very quiet. Only one or two long green straggling pondweeds had found a home in it, and at the bottom there were the fragments of a broken plate. The archway was quite open; staircases mounting to the interior. I passed at once into the inner court, which was also perfectly silent and very bright and peaceful. It was thoroughly well swept, but not in thorough repair; the flagstones rising and falling after the manner of their race when long neglected. The house consists of a centre and two wings, surrounding three sides of a quadrangle. On the fourth side, the front which faces the lake, a colonnade of pillars, open but roofed, connects the two wings.

Between these pillars I could see the lake sparkling and dancing, and when I went outside it lay before me. It is separated from the house by a few strips of gravel and grass and flower-beds. This is the so-called Grinerick. The bay or inlet of it in front of the house, is about eight hundred yards wide. To the right it spreads out into a broad sheet (partly hidden by a headland), which, however, very soon narrows again and loses itself in a reedy shallow in which there is a narrow and short estuary of deep water that connects the Grinerick with the Rheinsberg, a much larger lake, of which the Grinerick might very well be called only an arm. Straight in

front, on a rising ground on the opposite shore of the bay, is the Obelisk which Prince Henry raised to the memory of the heroes of the Seven Years' War. As seen from this point it is very striking. From the first one of the best thought out, it has proved to be the most lasting of Prince Henry's decorative designs. The grounds, properly so-called, are on the left. From here we see only a thicket of old trees, sweeping round the curve of the bay.

The terrace or strip of garden immediately in front of the house, is kept in order, the gravel is smooth, the shrubs are attended to, there is a great quantity of mignonette and sweet pea, and there are even some rows of balsams and other greenhouse plants in pots. They were all blossoming and smelling their very best in the hot sunshine. The lake was dancing and sparkling hard by. The outside of the house had been repainted not long before, and was blazing very white. Five statues amongst the shrubs, Apollo and the Four Elements, long unused to any other kind of clothing, were also receiving coats of white paint. A man with pots and brushes had rested his ladder on the shoulders of the Water, and was oiling her cheeks as I went by. He was the only living human being I saw.*

* Laid on year by year for many years together these successive coatings of oil-paint have blunted the delicate outlines with which Glume — or if not Glume, then some other even less remembered sculptor of that day—took such pains. Laid as often on mere mouldings, foliage, and other tracery in cornices and elsewhere, the paint, by dint of yearly repetition, hides the or-

The Rhin flows out of the lake hard by on the left. It is a modest stream, limpid but rather dark, which in the course of its short life has already flowed through seven lakes. Becoming famous just where we make its acquaintance, its further course is a very dull one,—through the desert towards a more arable country and other lakes, in one of which it gets cut in two. In that forked state it drops into the Havel, not very long before the Havel drops into the Elbe.

It was once spanned at this point by a very grand bridge, the parapets of which carried groups of genii sculptured in stone. But in 1765 the genii, which may possibly have become weak in the ankles and dangerous, were taken down again and replaced by enormous vases copied from the antique. Now the vases are also gone with the bridge that bore them; and there is instead a plain wooden bridge, with hydrangea tubs on its parapets.

From the bridge a very fine broad walk sweeps towards a flight of steps that leads to the higher

ganic forms and leaves at last only unevennesses. Artists and students of art are loud in their outcry against this particular mode of restoration—much in favour, it is said, with the Prussian *Hofkammer*. One is led to join in the cry, however ready one may be to make allowances for a body high in authority which is anxious to show something for its money, to maintain its infallibility, and to take no telling from professional persons. A pot of white paint is such a cheerful thing—so handy, so applicable, and seemingly so harmless—that one cannot wonder at a *Hofkammer* for forgetting that there is 'death in the pot' to all delicate form.

grounds beyond. On both sides are fine old trees in plenty, grown into thickets, and high old hedges. There are flower-beds with rows of hothouse plants, and some pedestals with the remains of mossy sculptures. Just at the entrance are two dark gray groups of what were once Proserpina on the one side and Daphne on the other, both frantic in their lovers' grasp. The passions which swayed them are weather-beaten now and porous, and a good deal chipped and blunted. The heads and trunks remain, but the limbs—the white arms that were tossed towards Heaven so wildly, and the strong legs that ran off with those fair burdens and their owners all together—are mostly quite gone, and have given place to plain iron rods, inexpressive of transports. The shriek of despair on Daphne's marble lips has turned into a loud unplastic roar, the lips having dropped off and left a dark round hole behind them. At the end of the walk the broad flight of steps is crowned with two colossal Sphinxes, looking grandly into space over the tourist's head as he climbs; their immortal calm untroubled by the loss of the nose of one of them.

The period of neglect having come to an end, what is left is now taken care of.

It was not long till in a thicket on the left I found Prince Henry's tomb, a square building tapering to the top. It is hardly a stone's throw from the steps. Of course I read the long inscription which he himself wrote. The unique solemnity of its tone

harmonized well with the mood of the deserted flower-garden. On this epitaph I shall have to come back another time.

Further on a number of walks, some between high hedges, some open, lead to the right into what in England would perhaps be called the Gardens; a large and long reach of pleasure grounds that bound the waters and end in the Forest of Boberow. Turning down one of these I found it was going to lead me to the Lake, on the shore of which I saw two ladies sitting under the trees, the one sketching and the other reading. Leaving them undisturbed, I struck off into the interior and soon came to a point at which a number of walks met—a round open space in the centre of which there was a sort of temple, *i.e.*, a cupola on pillars. Still further on, one by one, I found a great many other monuments, in a more or less perfect state of repair or rather of ruin —fountains, grottoes, urns, and statues, stone seats and artificial ruins, or what had once been such. I knew beforehand that very many monuments—some of the principal ones, such as the Temple of Friendship—laid waste by long neglect, had been pulled down. Some of those that are left are overgrown with bushes, or have mouldered away nearly to their foundations, in both cases baffling curiosity. The entrance to one large grotto, once lined with shells and looking-glasses, was walled up breast high, the roof within having become dangerous; peering into the darkness I saw some shells still

clinging to the dripping walls. The grounds are in many parts charming, but having had more than a century to ripen in they ought to be far more charming. They are pretty well kept in order now, but everywhere they bear the traces of the neglect they suffered from before—the simple and mere neglect which cuts down a dead shrub without planting another in its room, and lets the trees run up into thickets of bare stems and scanty canopies. But in the bright July noon it was hard to be critical. The greenness and the spreading boughs and the glimpses of shining water, all snapped their fingers at landscape gardening. The air was aglow with the breath of summer, and yet cooled by the universal shadow that fell from the tree-tops over head. Only here and there some rays of sunshine that had stolen through lay about in patches on the gravel, and one of them had caught the outstretched hand of a gray old goddess down a side walk. With the exception of the two ladies and the man who was doing up the Elements, I had not seen a soul. And yet the place was just the one for summer idlers to fasten upon; those persons who dislike mineral waters, but love to lounge in pleasant grounds with a little gossip or flirtation. Sure that not one such person had ever been at Rheinsberg before myself, had ever thought of going there, or ever as much as heard of the place, quite sure that not one was at that moment within fifty miles of it, but very

nearly as sure that the day would come when it would swarm with such persons, I felt, I suppose, like a navigator who likes adventure, solitude, &c., for their own sakes, and is glad to think that the generations who are to bless his memory for finding out the land and taking possession of it in their name are not born yet.

Having said, in answer to a question of the landlord's, that I would 'dine with the other gentlemen at the *table d'hôte*,' I cut my walk short. The *table d'hôte* was served in a little corner room of the inn, on the ground floor, a trifle cleaner, perhaps, than some of the other rooms, but furnished with nothing but a table and chairs to the number of the party. The dinner on this and all other days consisted of soup, two sorts of meat—the one boiled, the other not boiled but what is called roasted, *i.e.*, cooked in some manner over a fire without the help of water—potatoes in great plenty, and some other vegetable or stewed currants. The dishes were served by a most worthy and excellent girl, who was, however, I think the very dirtiest servant girl I ever saw, and the most unmethodical and phlegmatic. She shuffled in and out with both hands full, pushing the door to with her shoulder or else leaving it open, then suddenly dropping the dishes on the nearest corner, and rushing off almost desperately in answer to some call from the other end of the house.

Further service there was none. Each man carefully cleaned his fork and helped himself. The party consisted besides myself of two landscape painters and three men of the law; these last being concerned in the administration of justice.

Not being a man of the law myself or even a landscape painter, being on the contrary evidently a tourist and actually as it turned out a foreigner, I do not think that I was very welcome. But under the circumstances it might have been a hard thing for anybody to seem very glad to see anybody else. The tone of the conversation, which went on without any very active part taken on my side, was more like what I conceive the tone of conversation may be in jail than that of an ordinary dinner party—gruff and abrupt, instead of bland, expansive, and conciliatory. Each person then present was for the time being dissatisfied with his lot, thinking himself ill-fed, ill-served, ill-used, and seeing no immediate remedy. Which are not the conditions under which table-talk can be expected to become sprightly and instructive.

Something that was said about a murder caught my ear and made me ask questions. It turned out that the body of a murdered man had been found a good many weeks before in one of these endless forests—I think amongst the reeds on the margin of one of these numberless tarns—and that the police, or rather my fellow-guests as head and

back of the police, had soon after got hold of another man on suspicion; but though they had kept him in their hands all that while, and spared no interrogations, and were in their hearts sure that he had done it, they had not been able to get a scrap of direct evidence against him. They were now about to let him go his way again. They were a little crest-fallen, and very cross with their subordinates for not finding the gun with which the murder had been wrought. It was known that the prisoner had gone out with a gun one day, and come back without it; and his own story, that he had sold it on the public road to a man from Mecklenburg, whom he had never seen before and whose name he did not know, was not believed.

In the afternoon I had a long ramble. Beginning where I had left off in the morning I pushed my way further, and soon found the path that led to the Obelisk. From the base of the Obelisk there is a fine view of the Palace and town across the Lake. I read all the inscriptions, twenty-eight in number,* and then went on. There was a splendid grass walk leading right through the Park. It was a real Park,† abounding in foliage and having

* The obelisk will be described further on.

† The English word 'park' has been borrowed by the Germans, and is misused by them to mean what we call 'grounds'—even grounds of the most modest pretensions. A few borders of shrubs round a villa are called 'The Park.'

a magnificent carpet of luxuriant grass and wild flowers. It was crossed in different directions by several avenues, all of which but one were grassy and turfy; the trees none the better for neglect, but still luxuriant. The path I had taken led me to another of Prince Henry's monuments, a curious piece of masonry, very much like the base of a brick chimney, ten or twelve feet square, standing all alone amongst the grass and bushes and overshadowing trees. Doubtless it had once stood on some trim plot or terrace, garnished perhaps with urns and statues and the like; but all that was utterly gone, and Nature had crept back into her old place quite close up to the building. At the top there were some figures in relief symbolizing death, but the greater part of what I may call the front was made to look like a closed door, on which there was a long inscription dated 1790. This inscription, beginning—

Oh vous dont les cendres sont confondues,

is in Prince Henry's best style, grand and hopeless, with a dash of sentimentality. I stood still and copied it, but it is too long to be given here. It is to the memory of 'cherished relations, constant friends, and faithful servants,' of whom 'nothing' remains but the *souvenir*. In one of the lives of the Prince I have met with a passing notice of this monument; but I do not know what special motive he had for raising it. I do not suppose that anybody's ashes

are placed in it. I incline to think that having put up and being about to put up stones and tablets to the memory of nearly everybody he had ever known, the Prince in his really princely, generous fashion was afraid lest the shades of those who were left out might take the omission in ill-part and think themselves neglected, and that therefore, to prevent any such feeling, he raised this four-cornered memorial to All and Sundry. It is thus a sort of Office of All Saints, in the Rheinsberg Use. It ends by commemorating that 'sombre sadness which will come one day with its funereal veil to envelope us all.' Passers-by are asked to shed some tears.

I found out afterwards that the Temple of Friendship, of which there is such frequent mention in the annals of Rheinsberg, stood very near to this block of funereal masonry. I suppose that the one may have had something to do with the other. The Temple, having become quite ruinous, was pulled down only a very few years ago.*

* During a very long term of years, certainly ever since the death of Prince August, the last resident proprietor, in 1843, if not for a good while before, this has been the only method of treatment ever applied to the monumental remains on which the hand of Time has begun to work havoc. Nothing has ever been done to prevent them from falling to pieces, but when they have become perfectly ruinous they have been pulled down, and the materials carted away. (The one German word '*abgetragen*' describes the whole process, and is frequently to be heard at Rheinsberg.) The coach-houses and conservatories are full of statues more or less broken, and even of columns and capitals and

Not actually shedding sensible tears for lapidary sorrow, but reflecting with some pathos that I was one of perhaps four or five persons who in the course of fifty years and more had as much as looked at any of Prince Henry's architectural designs with sympathy and interest, I went on my way. Only a few steps further on there was a sudden fall in the ground, and through an opening in the trees I saw the lovely little lake of Boberow * lying before me, quite embedded in forest. A well-kept footpath skirts about a third part of it, leading in and out amongst some fine old Scotch firs with the reddest and rustiest stems I ever saw;—*glowing* red like pillars of fire, and the rust peeling off them

other *débris*, piled high on the top of each other. Since my first visit the local guardians of the house and grounds, to show their own willingness to repair the mischief and lend a hand in some work of restoration, thus paving the way possibly for a new *régime*, have dragged from a coach-house the least damaged figure of a female they could find, a Flora hardly chipped at all (of whose former position I suppose nothing is known), and have put her on a pedestal in the centre of what they say was the site of the Temple of Friendship, only a few paces from the commemorative tomb I have been describing. The lady, who is cheerfully dressed in nothing at all but some flowers in her hair and a cornucopia under her left arm, and has certainly not a *soupçon* of anything like a funereal veil about her, is all, I daresay, that friendship could desire, but she jars, I think, with the sombre tone of Prince Henry's French inscription.

* Boberow is derived from *bobr*, modern High German *biber*, a beaver. The name occurs not unfrequently. Babelsberg, the Emperor's favourite country house at Potsdam, bears the same derivation. It was spelt not very long ago *Babersberg*, and in still earlier times *Boberow-Berg*. (Fidicin, *Die Territorien der Mark Brandenburg*, iv., 2, 168.)

in large flakes. On the further side a forest of beech and oak takes its beginning, and the ground slopes upwards again. By dint of a good deal of scrambling and some plunging in marshy places, I made my way round the whole lake. The forest seemed to stretch in that direction for many miles. Suddenly I stood on the margin of what I rightly judged to be one of the country roads of that part of the Mark. It was a sort of canal, of the width of an ordinary road, filled with wonderfully light and fine sand. As there was not a breath of air, I could trace the marks of wheels and hoofs; otherwise, with the help of wind and rain, the sand is able to put on a smooth surface very speedily. Driving or riding in these roads is hard and painful work for man and beast. Walking is nearly impossible; there is usually, but not always, some strip of turf or heather alongside for wayfarers. Except the highway to Berlin, which has an artificial foundation and only a top-dressing of sand, all the roads in the neighbourhood are much like this one. Only the sand itself, according to the locality, differs in purity.

In the evening I heard music and the noise of a multitude coming from under the trees in the Triangle opposite the *Rathskeller*, and looking that way I saw a crowd of people. It turned out that a merry-go-round, rather finely called a *Carrousel*, had arrived in the place in the course of the day,

and was beginning a series of performances of eleven nights. It was of the usual sort,—hobby-horses and high-backed chairs chasing one another round a ring. Such a method of recreation being much of a novelty in those parts, the whole population was afoot to look at it. A powerful big-boned woman thumped hard on a harmonium from eight o'clock till eleven; a thin, eager, male assistant—fed on scraps, I fear—following hard after her at her elbow on a fiddle. Everybody mounted and had a ride—I believe that even the men of the law and my artist friends had their turn,—and the excitement was pretty well kept up till near the end of the 'engagement.' The price of admission was low; but the owner, as he afterwards told me, made a very good thing of his eleven performances.

I will not say that his whirligig was what I had gone all that way to see, or that I was glad of the jingle of its melodies till late in the summer night. When the clock had struck eleven, silence did indeed settle down on Rheinsberg. I went up to my room, and leaned out at the only one of the four windows from which I could see anything;—it looked into the corner of the market-place and at the *Schloss* beyond. There was no real darkness, least of all in the summer heaven. Though the evening twilight had ceased to tarry for the coming of the dawn, yet overhead the depths of space were luminous, and the stars shone with the keen light of eternity. But the silence in heaven and on earth was very great;

one listened almost painfully, but one heard nothing. The longer one listened the greater it grew, till at last, swelled by degrees with a stillness other than its own, it seemed to fill the ear like sound. It was indeed a *silentium acre*, in which the traveller must be forgiven if his excited fancy strove to catch, not the brief Present slumbering till the morrow, but a Past that had fallen on the sleep of ages. Gazing in the July midnight at the empty old Manor House bathed in the white moonbeams, and at the forsaken gateway, one strained one's ear, as it were without knowing it, to pierce the deep hush of a bygone century; one listened for voices sealed a hundred years ago, and for the words they spoke.

CHAPTER II.

QUARTERS.

A Dutch Landlord—A German Landlady—The outskirts of Rheinsberg—The Sand—'To Mirow'—My Fellow-lodgers.

HAVING made up my mind to get out of the *Rathskeller* as soon as possible, but to continue afterwards on the most friendly and neighbourly footing with all belonging to it, I told the landlord the next forenoon that I might perhaps stay in Rheinsberg for a week or two if I could find lodgings anywhere. I said I knew I must be very much in his way in the great room which he had given me and which he must so often have need of.—He had smaller rooms.—I did not like the ground floor.—But upstairs there were—— Oh, I was sure he must constantly be in want of all his single rooms for travellers, particularly commercial travellers. I should not like to put him about, perhaps be the cause of his offending old customers. Did he not think he could find lodgings for me anywhere? Quite near, if possible, so that I should be the more easily able to eat and drink at the *Rathskeller*.

This conversation, being held in the principal

tap-room, was listened to by some of the townsfolks who were drinking their early beer. 'He's a Dutchman, he,' they said to me, nodding at the landlord and introducing him; 'he'll do what you tell him.' The said landlord was, in fact, an uncommonly big, burly, and red-haired personage, whom in my heart I did not admire. And it turned out that he and his wife and her brother, the head waiter, had all immigrated some years before from Oranienburg, a place not very many miles distant, originally founded by a Dutch Princess.* Judging by what Fontane says, the inn must have been a more comfortable place before they got it into their hands. And it struck me that the burghers, owing doubtless to this foreign descent of his, treated their host, in spite of his big looks, with no respect.

A grocer was found who offered to take me into his house. The grocer and his wife and all the little staring children were Jews, and when I found that they dealt in nothing but sugar, soap, herrings, and petroleum, and that the rooms designed for me were just opposite the shop on the other side of the passage, and that the whole family followed me thither to stare at me with their mouths open, I brought forth my dislike of ground-floors and went home to tell the Dutchman that there were other rooms in Rheinsberg and that he must find them.

* Louisa Henrietta, wife of the Great Elector. In honour of her it was named Oranienburg (Orangeburgh).

He said there really were no others. I said there certainly were. At that he put his finger to his forehead and went off, and in a few minutes came back again all wondering and delighted. Yes, Frau Lemm would take me, but not till to-morrow. He had not thought of her. Excellent rooms and capital situation, next door but one. It turned out that Frau Lemm, who made bonnets and owned a house in the market-place, had let her whole first floor from Michaelmas onwards, but, being free to do what she liked with it in the meanwhile, she was willing to give me a part of it. She had already let the bigger half of it for the summer months to an invalid schoolmaster and his young wife. The remaining rooms being quite empty, she bargained for the delay of one day, in order to put in a bed, a sofa, a table, and window-blinds. She laid stress on the blinds, whilst I begged her not to give herself that trouble. With a double row of forest trees brushing the walls, sweeping the roof, and towering till they shut out every inch of horizon, there was twilight even at mid-day in all the front rooms.

Frau Lemm was a gentle, elderly, cheerful person, possessed of a quiet humour. She bore the marks of having been a *blondine* in her day. She had very blue eyes, very light hair beginning to turn thin, a fair complexion, a great deal of self-respect, and, I think, a married daughter in Berlin. She lived quite alone in her bonnet-shop downstairs, adjoining which, however, she had a sitting-room,

a bed-room, and a kitchen. The other half of the ground-floor was let to the *Herr Gerichtsrath*, the Head of Law and Fountain of Order in Rheinsberg. I never heard his name. He was gone to Switzerland to keep holiday, leaving his rooms and his hens to the care of his man-servant, and his legal duties to my friends of the *table d'hôte* (who could not find out the murder). My neighbours upstairs were, as I said, a young couple about a year married, a half-fledged pastor—*i.e.*, something between a schoolmaster and an afternoon preacher, and his pretty young wife. He had had the misfortune quite to lose his voice very soon after his marriage, and could not say a word for himself above his breath. He was on sick leave, and as it was not likely that his voice would ever come back, so Frau Lemm told me, he might expect soon to be pensioned altogether. I could not help thinking Frau Lemm quite unfeeling. She said it was very sad, no doubt, but there was no help for it; there were a great many sad things in this world, and we must lay our account with them. My poor neighbour wore black clothes and a white tie as a witness for the profession he was never to enter. He was very much cleaner and more like a gentleman than very many of his class in Germany are, and always cheerful and hearty in his looks and greeting, and his young wife was cheerful and pleasant, cooking all the forenoon in the kitchen at the head of our stair. I tried to be a quiet neighbour to them.

In the afternoon of this my second day I took a walk through the town to look at it. As was already said, Rheinsberg is very regularly built. The principal streets run from end to end, and these are crossed by others which lead down to the lake. The streets are all wide, and the houses all low. Two or three exceptions, the houses spared by the fire, stand near the church.

On the north side the town ends in a sort of suburb, consisting of four granaries, a bleaching green with poles and ropes, a bench on the roadside, and a bee-hive. Beyond this the road leads for a mile or two through open country, with the lake on the left and a gigantic semi-circle of forest bounding the horizon. The road itself is of pure sand and is bordered on both sides by sand mixed everywhere with a tough crawling plant—a species of goose-foot, I believe—on which millions of magnificent caterpillars wax fat and big. The stranger thinks at first that the whole landscape is made of sand and stunted goose-foot and caterpillars. It is not till he has been struck by scattered groups of country people crouching at work, that he finds out that there are fields and crops on all sides. These crops —grain, potatoes, &c.—though so thin as to be missed by the untrained eye, are of great value to their owners, who know exactly where they are and cultivate them eagerly.

When I had gone about half-a-mile I stopped and looked at a sign-post that pointed to the right.

There was a track in that direction, but so faint a one in the drifting sand that but for the sign-post I should certainly not have noticed it. On the board were the words 'To Mirow.' This, then, was doubtless the very road (certainly no better then than now) taken by Prince Frederick and his party on the day of their visit to 'Sleepy Hollow,' and by the Mecklenburg Court when the visit was returned. Let those who have forgotten Mr. Carlyle's description of the two excursions, read it over again.*

Hardly waiting till the twenty-four hours had passed I installed myself, and found Frau Lemm in some trouble about one of the window blinds. The wooden pin that had been pushed into the lower hem to stiffen it, had got broken, and Frau Lemm, who had not observed the accident till the blinds were being hung, made no end of apologies for not having been able to get a new pin in proper time. She looked so woe-begone, laying hold of the blind with the one hand and twisting the limp hem ruefully round the fingers of the other, whilst she eagerly explained how the accident had happened, and assured me again and again that the man had promised the new pin for the afternoon, that I thought it necessary to look grave too, and even, I believe, to say something about being 'sure that she would have it replaced without loss of time.'

* Mr. Carlyle. *History of Frederick the Great*, vol. ii., pp. 609–17.

Otherwise the rooms were furnished much more comfortably than I should have thought possible. The very well-bred unemployed servant of the holiday-keeping *Gerichtsrath*, had agreed to do me some services, of course unofficially. I had, as was natural, made difficulties about giving occupation to another man's servant, but these Frau Lemm had overruled. After all, I could not forbid her accepting help on my account from anyone who was willing to give it. Thus everything was settled as nicely as possible. I always breakfasted at home, and sometimes, too, I had a very comfortable evening meal there made of tea out of my own portmanteau and fish out of the lake, or cold chicken and eggs, and excellent strawberries or raspberries which Wilhelm good-naturedly went and gathered in a garden beyond the walls, paying a few *groschen* for leave. Other berries Frau Lemm sometimes boiled into admirable jam. Long before it was really dark outside, I used to devour these good things in the deepest of twilights; my windows wide open, and a wall of dense black foliage rising in front of them.

In a few days, the weather having become very hot, dinner was served under the horse-chestnut trees in the Triangle over against the *Rathskeller*. There, too, those who were so minded could sit till late in the evening, drinking beer and listening to the music of the merry-go-round. Thus I saw little more of the interior of the inn.

CHAPTER III.

THE MANOR.

The Counts of Lindow and Lords of Ruppin—The Margraves and Electors of Brandenburg—The Rheinsbergs—The Platens—Knights Predatory—The Bredows—Their origin—The Thirty Years' War—The Lochows—M. Chenevix de Béville—King Frederick William I.

THE first time that Rheinsberg, spelt 'Rynesperg,'* is found mentioned, is in a document of the year 1335. The place belonged, no doubt, either then or in still earlier days, to a family of the same name. It is not known when they, in difficulties most likely, parted with it. They do not seem to have been a thriving race. For a while longer, till near the end of the fifteenth century, I believe, they picked a poorish sort of living from off

* In the old deeds published by Riedel, the name of the place is spelt differently each time, Rinssbergk, Rinesberghe, &c. Hoppe in his *Chronik*, has brought together seventeen such variations; the number might be added to. About a century ago 'Reinsberg' was the usual spelling, and it is the one Mr. Carlyle has taken. I follow the spelling which I believe is universal now-a-days. The name of the stream, contrary to that of the place, has never either in spelling or pronunciation been affected by High German. It is written 'Rhyn' or 'Rhin,' (pronounced *Reen* in English). Of 'Remusberg,' the version of the name to which Frederick the Great adhered, I shall have something to say by and by.

some lands and villages of little value that they owned in other parts of the Ruppin country, and then they died out.*

The sovereigns of these parts in those days were the Counts of Lindow and Lords of Ruppin. We must needs speak of them in the plural, for, like many other dynasts even in much later times, those of them who were of age usually reigned and governed together, three or four at once. The Counts were vassals, very powerful vassals, of the Electors of Brandenburg; they were not at all 'immediate' Lords of the Holy Roman Empire, but, on the other hand, they intermarried only with reigning houses, and ranked socially with these. They were, on the whole, very loyal to the Electors, and followed them into many battles. Their proper handicraft was, as a matter of course, fighting; but from first to last they were a high-hearted, highly-cultivated race, fond of the gentle arts and contrasting almost painfully with their surroundings in the Mark. They were of a Thuringian stock, Arnstein by name, and had come northwards about the beginning of the twelfth century. They took their title of Lindow, not from the little white dusty town that we drove through on the morning of our journey, but from another place of the same name in the Anhalt country. Keeping court at Ruppin and being Counts, we cannot wonder if, in the course of time,

* Riedel. *Codex Diplomaticus Brandenburgensis.* Erster Haupttheil, iv., 495-6.

people, for the sake of convenience, called them the 'Counts of Ruppin.' In the long run, thinking the title a handy one, the Counts themselves took it now and then. The last of them, Wichmann, a fine young fellow of seventeen, carried the Electoral Hat at the Diet of Worms in 1521, when Joachim of Brandenburg was invested by Charles V. In less than three years from that time, on the 28th of February, 1524, he died of a cold that he had caught by going out too soon after an attack of small-pox. His shield and helmet were thrown into his grave after him, and that was the end of the dynasty of Lindow. The Elector of Brandenburg took possession of the fief. To this day one of the many titles of the German Emperor is (the inaccurate one) 'Count of Ruppin.' Frederick the Great sometimes made use of the title in travelling; so did Frederick William III.

The relations betwixt the Counts of Lindow-Ruppin and the Hohenzollerns would, or rather do, form an interesting chapter in German political history. Ruppin was a fief of Brandenburg; but in the older times, when the Counts were strong and hearty and the Margraves of more than one line were many of them feeble, the feudal relations were as often as not practically forgotten by all concerned. The Counts formed alliances and carried on hostilities without ever thinking of the Margraves; they supported foreign potentates with men

(as late as 1489), and thus were sometimes actually at war with Brandenburg. The Margraves themselves always treated Ruppin as a foreign country; in their deeds and documents it is never alluded to as a part of the Mark. Treaties were concluded between the two states, sometimes by the mediation of other powers. With the internal government of Ruppin, the Margraves, of course, had nothing to do. Afterwards, the Hohenzollerns having come into the Mark, and the Lords of Ruppin having got into financial difficulties, things took a different turn. The history of these 'relations' of the two dynasties is a notable instance in which the astonishing and, one may say, almost divine powers of assimilation bestowed on the Hohenzollerns, came into early play. The peculiar position of the Counts of Lindow, not wholly independent yet not wholly feudatory, offered some difficulties and some advantages. Their growing poverty and the harassments attending it, the long minority of the last of them followed by the sudden extinction of the race, offered nothing but advantages. The Empire and the Emperor, wavering for a while, fell latterly to the side of the stronger. Some other neighbours, such as the Dukes of Mecklenburg, who held Brandenburg fiefs but had lands of their own independent of Brandenburg, were strong and could keep their footing, till they were brought half-way to their knees in our own day. It is very likely that the Counts of Lindow died out just in time to save

themselves from sinking to the rank of ordinary subjects of the Electors. These, in spite of protests and resistance, were beginning to levy taxes in Ruppin, to make laws for it along with the rest of the Mark, and to interfere in the administration of justice; having found the afore-mentioned long minority very favourable for these purposes. The inhabitants of Ruppin had begun to appeal from their own Sovereign to the Elector, and the Count was expected to answer for himself. When Wichmann, after he came of age, refused to let his subjects be taxed by anybody but himself, the Elector used force. The morsel in this instance was slowly manipulated during nearly a century—kneaded, knocked, and gently hacked—till at last, by a sudden providence, it was swallowed whole without further cooking.*

Other families in the Mark, originally just as 'good' as that of the Counts of Lindow, though less powerful,† have long ago got mixed up with the ordinary *noblesse*.

In those times the castle and town of Rheinsberg were both well fortified. The *Landbuch* of the

* These matters are more fully explained by Riedel (*Codex Diplom. Brand.* iv., 28), and also in a special article by Raumer—*Landeshoheit der Churfürsten von Brandenburg über die Grafen von Lindow-Ruppin*—in the second volume of the *Märkische Forschungen*.

† Such I believe was the family of Puttlitz; — *Freie Herren* — Barons in the true sense of the word.

Emperor Charles IV., names the place as one of the seven strongholds of the county of Lindow.* In the old prints we see high circular walls with towers at intervals, of the sort usual in mediæval fortified places. (These prints do not differ in any respect from the frontispiece to Bunyan's Towne of Mansoul.) When the Margraves of Brandenburg and the Dukes of Mecklenburg were at war with each other, the inhabitants of the surrounding country with their cattle and other valuables often took refuge in Rheinsberg, in consequence of which, says Hennert, 'there were frequent fires, in which parts of the town were burned down; and as the lords of Rheinsberg were too poor to give help, the townsfolks had to rebuild their houses themselves as best they might.' †

The Rheinsbergs seem to have sold their house and land to the Platens. The Platens continued in possession till after the middle of the fifteenth century, when the last of them, Achim von Platen, dying without male heir, his son-in-law, Berend von Bredow, was invested with the fief in 1465. The Bredows, a long-headed race, were, I suppose, the greatest landowners in the so-called 'Havel-

* 'Comitas Lyndoensis has habet municiones: Ruppin Antiqua, Ruppin Nova, Lindow, Gransoye, Rynsberg, Wustershusen, Rynow.' *Kaiser Karl's IV. Landbuch der Mark Brandenburg*, p. 37.

† Hennert. *Beschreibung des Lustschlosses und Gartens Sr. Königl. Hoheit des Prinzen Heinrichs Bruders des Königs, zu Reinsberg, &c., &c.* Berlin, bey Friedrich Nicolai, 1778.

land,' *i.e.*, the region bordering upon the river Havel (which makes so great a bend as nearly to enclose a tract of country). They are to this day a great family in those parts. What is known of their origin is as follows.—The Devil having held a muster on the earth one day, put all the ill-doing knights and squires into a big sack, laid it on his back, and in high spirits flew off to hell with it. Flying across the town he was so careless as to allow his sack to graze against the point of the church steeple, which tore a hole in it, so that a good many of the squires, about a fourth-part it is thought of the whole bagful, fell out, and were dropped upon the ground without his noticing it. These were the Bredows, who, delighted at having got out of Satan's clutches for a while, called the town 'Friesack' (Freesack), and from thence spread themselves over all the neighbouring country.*

The descendants of Berend remained in possession of Rheinsberg till 1618. Long before that, things had gone far wrong. There may have been mismanagement and extravagance, but it would have been hard for anybody with the habits of a squire

* Adalbert Kuhn. *Märkische Sagen und Märchen*, S. 153. Other accounts of the extraction of the Bredows are given in the books of genealogy. *Friesack*, or *Vrisach*, is a Wendish word, and has of course nothing to do with a bag. It was, if not the cradle and *Stammschloss* of the Bredows, at least a very old possession of theirs, but it had been taken from them and bestowed on the Quitzows only a short time before Frederick I. attacked Dietrich von Quitzow there. (For which attack, see Mr. Carlyle: *Hist. of Fred. the Great*, vol. i., p. 197). Friesack lies on the Rhin.

of those times to live or let live on such an estate. The lakes with the fish that were drawn out of them were worth a trifle;* so were the forests; but great parts of the 'land,' tracts of mere sand, were worth nothing. In earlier times the knights had two strings to their bow. If their lands yielded little, they could, and did, eke out a living by pouncing on travellers or plundering some neighbouring town. It was said,—

'Reiten und Rauben sei keine Schande,
Es thaten's die Edelsten im märkischen Lande.' †

Everybody did it, and made a good thing of it, till the Elector Frederick I. put difficulties in the way.

In this matter the Counts of Lindow followed the example of the Elector. Their zeal in putting down the exercise of private judgment in things temporal, is gratefully remembered by the peasantry still. As the following story will show.

The Herr von Fratz, who lived in a castle at Krenzlin near New Ruppin, was a notorious robber. Under a bridge near his gate there was a wire connected with a bell in the hall of the castle, which bell rang whenever any person crossed the bridge, so that even in the night-time the *Junker* sallied forth and pounced on travellers. The Count of Lindow, misliking such practices, repeatedly

* Proportionally, the fishings were worth then a great deal more than they are now.

† Von dem Knesebeck. *Haus und Dorf Carwe*, p. 8.

threatened to burn his nest about his ears; but the Herr von Fratz took no heed of threats, and went on as before. Whereupon, the next time that the *Junker* came to New Ruppin, the Count forthwith sent horsemen to set fire to Krenzlin. And as soon as the flames had begun to spread, he led his visitor to the top of a tower and showed him his castle burning in the distance. The ruins bear the marks of fire to this day.

In the long run it was found necessary to let the Government have its will in these matters; though the discontinuance of forays and pillage made a mighty difference in the income of the country gentry.*

Every lord of Rheinsberg from first to last seems to have spent his life in a vain struggle to make

* There is of course a great deal to be said for the *Raubritter*. Their position was what now-a-days would be called a very 'difficult' one. Having had both right and might on their side, they were naturally loth to believe that these had forsaken them and gone over to the enemy—still more loth to think that they themselves were to be left, as it seemed, without a *raison d'être*. In Brandenburg they had no motive for taking orders from the earlier Margraves, Ascanian, Bavarian, or Bohemian, some of whom formally acknowledged their own helplessness by actually granting to certain towns authority to revenge themselves on the Knights. Thus the stronger Knights naturally learned to feel themselves independent in their own spheres; and the Margrave in his sphere did not greatly concern them. Bekmann says that they chose 'to be regarded as *Circumjoviales*; themselves stars in the sky, alongside of Jupiter.' Of course this did not suit the views of the Hohenzollerns, who, Bekmann adds, 'had to put themselves to a great deal of trouble, these habits and ideas having become so deeply rooted, to bring men to another mind.'

the ends meet. The Platens 'pawned two-thirds of their estate to the Lüderitzes and the other third to the Restorfs.' In 1533, we hear that 'all the villages on the estate were lying waste, and the fields belonging to them let to neighbouring villages.' In that year, Achim von Bredow having shown a wish to sell Rheinsberg to the Elector, commissioners came down from Berlin to make a valuation, and their report was that the yearly rental might be reckoned at six hundred and thirty-one florins, at which rate from eight to ten thousand florins would be a fair price. At that time the population consisted of thirty citizens, heads of families, who 'kept teams' (*gespannhaltende Bürger*), with their wives and children, and eleven cottars. All these worked for the lord of the manor; those who had teams ploughed and carted for him, and the others did manual labour. The proposed purchase came to nothing; Achim, hoping for more money very likely, having hummed and hawed too long on the pretence of consulting his relations. Eighty-five years later, in 1618, his descendant Justus von Bredow sold the manor to Cuno von Lochow. The Lochows may often enough have repented them of their bargain; they had a worse time by far than any of their predecessors had had. The Thirty Years' War with its nameless horrors befell. The district of Ruppin suffered more than any other part of the Mark, and that is saying a good deal. Year after year we read of

nothing but ravagings and burnings, foe and friend laying everything waste; Swedes, Danes, Saxons, the Brandenburgers themselves, 'Wallenstein's hordes,' 'Tilly's hordes,' Gallas, Banner, monsters and bugbears at whose names the countryman blessed himself, all chasing each other across these plains, or settling down on the wretched people, grinding them to mere hunger, and when they went away setting everything on fire. The bodies of the dead lay unburied on the roads. The living 'fed on acorns,' and for sheer want of *everything* became for long years afterwards little better than savages. In 1640, we read that in the county of Ruppin four villages only were inhabited; ninety had been laid in ashes. The towns were not much better off. Rheinsberg was burned down in 1635. The cattle plague broke out in 1637, and the plague itself in 1638. At the approach of the enemy 'the clergyman fled to Ruppin, where he died of grief, and the rest of the inhabitants took refuge on the Island of Remus in the lake, where they were massacred.' Forty years later, when the Great Elector joined the Dutch against Louis XIV., things were soon as bad as ever. In 1675 Wrangel, with a body of Swedes, quartered himself in Rheinsberg; the town was again burned down all but seven houses, and the inhabitants again fled to the island of Remus.

In 1685 the Lochows died out, and the Great Elector bestowed the fief on General du Hamel.

But before the year was out the General, with the Elector's consent, sold it for 12,400 dollars to the Privy Councillor Chenevix de Béville.* Soon afterwards a good many French refugees settled, some of them in the town of Rheinsberg, and many others in the villages round about. In 1701 Béville sold it to a man of the name of Hermann, but a few years later bought it back again. From the Councillor's son, Colonel de Béville, King Frederick William I. bought it in 1734 for his son the Crown Prince.

As soon as the purchase had been made, the King issued an order to the *Generaldirectorium*, enjoining on that body to take measures towards bettering the condition of the town of Rheinsberg. His Majesty descended to details. He gave directions that the chief street and the market place were to

* M. Chenevix de Béville was one of those Huguenots who left France *before* the Revocation of the edict of Nantes. A brother of his, having become a general in the Venetian service and a Roman Catholic, afterwards got back the family estates. Two cousins of the same name fled to England, and one of them found his way to Ireland and settled there. He was the grandfather of Dr. Chenevix, Bishop of Limerick, who again was the grandfather of the present Archbishop of Dublin. Another of the family was Paul Chenevix, *Doyen des conseillers du Parlement* of Metz, who died upwards of eighty years old in 1686, firm in the Protestant faith and steadfastly refusing the sacraments at the hands of the Romish bishop. For this his body was condemned to be dragged on hurdles, and, the protest of the Parliament notwithstanding, by a second order of the Court, was so dragged on the 28th of November, 1686. (Erman & Réclam. *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire des réfugiés français dans les états du roi*, ii. 23.

be plastered, that the thatch on the roofs was to be taken down and replaced by tiles, and that the fronts of the houses were to be brushed up and made to look clean and fresh. Towards defraying the expense of plastering he made a grant of five hundred dollars (seventy-five pounds sterling). For the roofing and refacing he promised to give five hundred dollars *per annum*, on condition that these improvements were carried out within five years. Certain taxes paid by the town were to be discontinued. The *Directorium* was to take into consideration whether it might be possible gradually to remit the personal services of the inhabitants; and the *commissarius loci* was to do all in his power to get manufacturers to settle in the place. Privileges were granted to a certain number of trades (enumerated by Hoppe).* In consequence of these measures, we are told, the place did begin to prosper. The residence of the Prince Royal and his court helped it up more than anything. Instead of the personal services the Prince accepted a forest belonging to the town. After his accession, Frederick gave back the forest, without asking for any equivalent.

In 1744, four years after his accession, Frederick the Great made a gift of Rheinsberg to his brother Henry, the third surviving son of Frederick William I. Prince Henry did not, however, live at

* Hoppe. *Chronik von Rheinsberg*, S. 79.

Rheinsberg till after his marriage, in 1752. From 1756 till 1763, whilst the War lasted, the Great House was again deserted. In 1758 the Swedes, under Field-Marshal Hamilton, 'a worthy and humane man,' encamped somewhere near the town, but did damage only to the amount of a contribution of 7,000 dollars. After the close of the Seven Years' War, during the remaining thirty-nine years of his life, from 1763 till 1802, Prince Henry made Rheinsberg his chief residence. As long as he lived, the place flourished. Particularly towards the end of his life he kept court there nearly the whole year round. After his death it went to his brother Ferdinand, the youngest of Frederick William's children. Prince Henry, indeed, by his Will had left the estate to his nephew, Louis (commonly called Louis Ferdinand), passing over the father, to whom else he was tenderly attached; the said father being, as Wills say, already very amply provided for. But Prince Ferdinand, who loved land and money dearly, felt himself so much aggrieved that his son generously gave up his claims, thinking to inherit ere long in the course of nature. But he fell, as is known, at Saalfeld during his father's lifetime, and thus Rheinsberg went eventually to his second brother, August, 'to the detriment of the creditors of the real heir.'* Prince Ferdinand

* *Aus Karls von Nostitz Leben und Briefwechsel*, S. 85. Prince Louis Ferdinand had of course counted on paying his debts,

died in 1813. Prince August died in 1843, upon which the estate reverted to the Crown.

Since 1802 no 'court' has been kept at Rheinsberg. Prince Ferdinand and his household may have gone there from time to time, but their visits, I believe, were short ones. Prince August and his wife (who was not of royal birth) and their children lived a great deal at Rheinsberg, of course as private persons. But that could do little good to the Town, which has never got over Prince Henry's death. On that occasion it at once went back into its old insignificance, and there it has remained. On the part of the Government there was at that time some talk of helping it by reclaiming portions of the waste land. But Napoleon having soon afterwards driven all such plans out of everybody's head, before he was settled the plans and the place had been forgotten, and they are forgotten to this day. In the words of Riedel, 'it has remained a most insignificant country town.' It is now looking wistfully towards the new Northern Railway, the line of which is to pass within eight or ten miles. Besides the railway, sanguine persons indulge themselves in hopes of a prince. 'There is again a Prince Henry, you know!' they say, with some vague sense of prior claims to the second son of the present Crown Prince. In the mean time the place

which were many and great, when he should have inherited his uncle's and his father's great possessions.

has begun to help itself a little, reclaiming its own waste lands, and showing other signs of awakening industry. Therefore one is the rather justified in hoping that every other good thing, if possible even a Prince and a railway station, may be given to it in the time to come.*

* The railway is open now, and passes at a safe distance.

CHAPTER IV.

THE HOUSE.

The Castellan and his Family—The Great Concert-room—Pesne's Frescoes—The apartments of the Princess Royal, Prince and Princess Henry, and Princess Amelia—Frederick's Study and Library, and Writing-table.

THE only person who lives in the Palace is the porter, or, as such officials are somewhat proudly styled in Germany, the 'Castellan.' On the third day of my stay and the first of my abode at Frau Lemm's, I went down in the quiet early afternoon, about the hour of the siesta, and, after pacing to and fro in the courtyard for awhile, made for the only door that bore the marks of modern fingers near the handle, and tinkled a little bell that hung hard by. As nobody came, I knocked and rang again, and then I opened the door and looked in and rang and knocked for a while longer. At last an old woman opened an inner door and looked out, but gave no answer to what I said to her. She did not even seem to listen to me, as people say now-a-days, with 'sympathy'—I mean with understanding and goodwill and just curiosity — on the contrary, she only gave me a vague unpromising stare, and then suddenly drew back and shut the door. From her manner, her abruptness and in-

difference and distressing ignorance, I at once and rightly judged her to be what I should call a temporary or transient old woman—*i.e.*, an old woman who had come to pay a visit, or carry a message, or been sent for to help in some way, not part and parcel of the Castellan's household;—and I was therefore the less sorry when she went out of my sight. After her came the Castellan himself, bustling and blushing and glad of a tourist, but thwarted in getting each arm thrust into its proper sleeve by his flurry and his bunch of keys. Having, of course, been a non-commissioned officer formerly, after settling in his new calling the Castellan had early laid a basis for his future happiness by marrying a wife. And it turned out that in their snug corner of the big old empty Palace she had, the very day before, brought forth a baby. He had gratefully and admiringly dropped into an afternoon doze beside mother and child, when I came and disturbed him.

We went straight upstairs and made first of all for the great concert-room in the same wing. It is a fine room, forty feet long and thirty-two wide. It has windows on both sides, those on the right looking towards the House of the Cavaliers and those on the left into the courtyard. The walls are of stucco, the spaces between the windows are filled with mirrors in gilt frames, the lustres that hang from the ceiling, though a good deal chipped, are fine specimens of the glass of that day,—otherwise the

room is empty. That for which it was very famous once is Pesne's fresco on the ceiling, 'The Rising Sun dispelling the shades of Darkness'—*i.e.*, the chariot of Apollo preceded by Fame and surrounded and followed by Graces, Hours, Loves, &c., driving away Night. Night is a fine young woman in a black drapery pulled tight about her shoulders, with dreams and owls hovering near her and a sleeping dove in her arms. 'We should feel her departure with greater repugnance,' says Hennert, 'had not the artist depicted the coming day with every sort of fair and joyous symbol.' Diana is there, and so are Venus and Amor and Zephyr and the Dawn, nymphs pouring dew on the earth out of golden bowls, others that throw open the gates of Heaven, genii that bring garlands and fling flowers and follow Fame dancing and leaping, whilst she blows her trumpet, and the horses turn restive, and one of them throws the God of Love, whose arrows fall out of his quiver and are scattered all over the earth. The fresco, as Fontane remarks, is highly Ovidian, and on this very account, I believe, it is hard for us to do it justice. We cannot worship or believe in these divinities, who would laugh at anybody who did, and we cannot help thinking that their draperies, considering how little good they do to the wearers, are needlessly troublesome so near the winds. The painter was tied and bound by the mannerisms of his time; with our eyes blindfolded by the mannerisms of our time, how can we be fair

to him? And yet the fresco leaves the spectator who cares nothing about schools, anything but indifferent. Whether by forbidden roads or not, it has got hold of some of Nature's secrets and made them its own. It has, before all things, caught the breezy sweep of the early light, and it throbs all through with the lusty hopes and purposes of morning. Everybody in it goes to his work with such hearty goodwill, from Apollo's fiery steeds down to those bare-legged young women who are going to help the sun to shine, and who step out so wonderfully firmly on nothing at all.

The fresco was begun in 1739 and finished in 1740, the year in which Frederick ascended the throne. We may not doubt that the painter, if not his employer, had an eye to the position of affairs in the realm of Prussia. We do doubt whether it was wise to speak so plainly in a language that anybody could read. The King at Potsdam was informed of what was done at Rheinsberg, and he might reasonably object to figuring as the genius of Night in a black shawl, turning his back to the chariot of Apollo and the Loves and Graces and posterity.

The concert-room, being unfinished, could not be turned to account by Frederick as Prince Royal. His own concerts took place in a room in the opposite wing. The only occasion on which he is believed to have made use of the great room, was when he spent six weeks at Rheinsberg as King in the autumn of 1740, six months after his Accession.

Adjoining the concert-room is a little round closet in the tower, with a fresco on the ceiling also by Pesne, in subject and treatment more in keeping with the size of this apartment and a talk *tête-à-tête*. It represents Ganymede seated on Jove's eagle and holding out a golden cup to Venus. Diana stands by, 'to show that a fine night enhances the pleasures of wine and love.'

In this wing there are some rooms called 'Princess Amélie's,' and others with no name at all. Leaving these and passing into the *corps de logis*, I was shown the rooms of the Princess Royal (afterwards Queen of Frederick the Great) and of Princess Henry. In the bed-room of the Princess Royal there is still some furniture, and on the ceiling of what was her ante-room there is another of Pesne's frescoes. From Prince Henry's time are the Shell Room,—in which the decorations on the walls and ceiling are of real shells—the Chinese room, and the Prince's library. Further on, and in the left wing, is Prince Henry's bed-room. It is very large and comfortable, and is still kept in tolerable order. It contains the big four-posted bed in which, I believe, the Prince died. Beyond the bed-room is the so-called gallery. Prince Henry constructed this gallery by pulling down a wall and throwing two rooms into one. Of which two that nearest the outer end of the wing had been the Crown Prince's music-room, where his daily concerts were held.

This wing, with about a half of the *corps de logis*, is the oldest part of the building—is, in fact, the original Castle of Rheinsberg, built I know not when. It was remodelled by Kemmeter before the Prince took possession (1734—1736), so as to lose all likeness to its former self. Afterwards the interior of a part of it, including the rooms just mentioned, was again altered by Prince Henry.

Frederick's Study in the tower at the end of the wing, has been much less meddled with than the rest; some of the furniture has been left, and the ceiling is as it was. It is a moderately sized octagon-shaped room with enormously thick walls and three windows in deep recesses, each of these on its several side looking out, as Mr. Carlyle says, 'on mere sky, mere earth and water in an ornamental state.' In the recesses are seats, between the windows are chairs. The legs and backs of the chairs bear marks of having been silvered in their day. In the middle of the floor is the writing-table, not larger than a lady's ordinary writing-table. It had gilt legs and was covered with red velvet; both gilding and velvet are now nearly quite gone.* It has a writing-board which can be moved up and down at pleasure. Overhead, on the ceiling, is

* 'In 1853,' says Fontane, 'when I visited Rheinsberg for the first time, the stratum of hard stuff which underlies the velvet pile, was pretty nearly intact. Since then things have changed for the worse. Not the half of the stuff is left. By the larger or smaller square that the pen-knife has cut away, we can trace the character and disposition of its owner.'

another of Pesne's frescoes, representing Studious Tranquillity. A genius is offering Minerva, who has sat down, a book, on the open page of which we read the names Horace and Voltaire; in the other hand he has a winged hour-glass. Another genius, with the sword of Mars in his hand, is whisking out of sight. In Frederick's time the room must have been singularly lightsome and gay and yet, protected by its stout walls, snug withal. Frederick's books were placed, part of them here between the windows, and part, it is believed, in the large closet which forms the only passage to the tower, and is lighted from the study by a glass door. They remained here for years after he had left off coming to Rheinsberg, even after he had given the place away, and were not removed till 1747, the year in which Sans Souci was finished, when they were taken to Potsdam.*

* To the best of my knowledge, there is not any catalogue extant of the Rheinsberg Library. The catalogue of Frederick's earliest library—that which was confiscated and sold in 1730—is to the fore, and has been described by Friedländer in the *Zeitschrift für preussische Geschichte und Landeskunde* for 1869. Wonderful is the number of Bibles in folio and quarto, and of works on theology and church history. Of these there may possibly have been fewer in later times; but, speaking roundly, Frederick was extremely conservative in his taste for books, what he liked early he liked late, and he read his favourites over and over again, long after he knew them by heart. There were 3,774 volumes in the confiscated library,—a large number for a young man of eighteen to possess. Friedländer gives a very amusing account of the adventures of the 'four chests and nine barrels' that contained the library, on their travels to Hamburgh and then to Amsterdam; King Frederick William having ever an eye to the main chance, and refusing indignantly the Hamburgh

Voltaire's portrait hung somewhere opposite the writing-table.

The walls of the window recesses and of the spaces between the windows were put into their present shape by Prince Henry. His own books stood here from the time of his marriage in 1752 till after the close of the Seven Years' War. From 1752 till 1756 I believe he made use of the room as his own study. When his books were removed into the new library in 1763, he panelled the walls to do away with the marks of shelves, and painted the panelling with vases, flowers, &c., in sign of the Four Seasons.* The whole is now covered from floor to ceiling with a yellowish, greenish, whitish wash. Between the windows, at a height of about ten feet from the ground, are brackets carrying the busts of Horace, Voltaire, Rousseau, and Diderot. They were, of course, placed there by Prince Henry.

The two wings, each ending in a round tower placed against it like a huge pillar in extremely high relief, of course correspond with one another, and

tradesman's price of eleven thousand dollars,—'a most unreasonable offer for so large a number of books.'

* Hennert. *Beschreibung*, S. 19, u. f. These alterations were carried out under the superintendence of the Baron Reisewitz, the *second* of that name who was Intendant at Rheinsberg. He lived after his appointment not quite a year, and died in 1764. Hennert even gives us the name of the artist who painted the vases and flowers. Popular writers in German periodicals usually take for granted that everything in the study is the remains of what Frederick left. Altogether they make a good many blunders in their descriptions, by not taking the trouble of looking into Hennert.

thus Frederick's study is the *vis-à-vis* of the round closet I described adjoining the concert-room. The two ends of the wings are connected, as aforesaid, by the Colonnade.

Hennert (and there has been little alteration since his time—more on the ground floor than upstairs) gives the number of rooms on the ground floor as thirty-six and in the *bel étage* as twenty-nine. According to him the number of square feet in each floor is 11,227. In Frederick's time the habitable part of the house was not much more than half this size. The *Cavaliergebäude*, which, Hennert tells us, contains fifty-nine 'furnished' rooms for visitors, was only just begun when Frederick left Rheinsberg, and the *Domestikenhaus*, or servants' quarters (built by the first Baron Reisewitz whilst the Seven Years' War was actually going on), had not even been thought of.

During the last forty years the house has stood uninhabited and nearly altogether dismantled. The widow and children of Prince August took with them, doubtless, or sold, any goods and chattels that belonged to them. The rest, including everything that was left from the times of Frederick the Great and Prince Henry, belonged to the Crown. Frederick William IV. took away many of the pictures and hung them in Potsdam and elsewhere.* Perhaps

* A few pictures are still left hanging here and there in some of the rooms, certainly not on any principle of selection or in

some of the remaining furniture was also taken away, or, it may be, sold.* Now, at all events, the house is nearly empty. The building is of course kept in thorough repair. From time to time some functionary from Berlin or Potsdam comes down for a night to see that things are in order, also, I suppose, to take in and give out moneys. For the use of that personage a few rooms have been furnished in modern fashion.

any order of arrangement. But several of the portraits are very valuable. In an out of the way corner are some odd drawings representing scenes from the 'night side' of court life — a ghost frightening a maid of honour, and the like—which are said to have been brought from Oranienburg.

* Only a few years ago odds and ends of furniture and quantities of old porcelain were rife in the town. There is nothing of that kind to be found *now*.

CHAPTER V.

FREDERICK TAKES POSSESSION.

Frederick takes the command of his regiment—The Amalthea—Rheinsberg is rebuilt—The Prince and Princess settle there—The King and Queen pay them a visit—The King repeats the visit—And misses the Sermon—The Prince reads to the Soldiers—Longevity of the clergy.

ACCORDING to a usage of some standing, the heir apparent of the Elector of Brandenburg was generally placed in an *Amt*. And thus Ruppin—the old Lindow fief, turned into an *Amt* on its being annexed to the Electorate—was bestowed on Crown Prince Frederick in 1732, on his coming forth from his eclipse in Cüstrin. His duties in Ruppin being chiefly of a military sort, he being colonel of the regiment there, it was necessary that he should live either in the town of New Ruppin or in the neighbourhood of it. In New Ruppin there was a very good house which the colonel, as a soldier and bachelor, could live in very well, but no palace fit for the heir to the throne with his consort and their lords and ladies. And, as Frederick was married in 1733, it was plain to all parties, King Frederick William included, that, if the young couple were to keep house together, fitting quarters must be found for

them somewhere. Frederick himself longing after country life, negotiations were set on foot for the purchase of Rheinsberg, the old border keep near the Mecklenburg frontier, about twenty miles from New Ruppin, belonging then, as has been said, to Colonel Chenevix de Béville. As his contribution to the purchase-money, the King gave 55,000 dollars (11th November, 1733). In January, 1734, the Crown Prince himself rode to Rheinsberg to settle the bargain, and on the 16th of March of the same year the King confirmed the purchase. The price paid was 75,000 dollars; the balance, as we gather, having been taken from the dowry of the Crown Princess.*

The place was thus bought, but the house was not big enough to be lived in. The remodelling and enlarging of it having been put into the hands of Kemmeter, the King's architect, he made out of the old castle the left wing and the left half of the *corps de logis* of the modern mansion. Room enough was thus obtained to hold the young court in a modest private condition, and the right wing and the rest of the centre, containing the apartments of state and representation, were left to be added afterwards. Kemmeter taking two years to his work, during that time Frederick and his consort remained to all intents and purposes separated.

* *Elizabeth Christine, &c., &c. Ein christliches Lebensbild gezeichnet von* W. Ziethe. Berlin, 1866. S. 113.

Frederick led the very cheerful life of a bachelor in New Ruppin, fulfilling his regimental duties and enjoying now and then a lark at night, when he and his officers were in a mood to break their neighbours' windows. He laid out a garden just beyond the town walls of New Ruppin and called it 'Amalthea,' and built a temple in it and spent the summer evenings there. The Amalthea yielded good vegetables. Years afterwards the kitchen at Rheinsberg was supplied from it, and choice specimens of its produce made a capital present to offer to His Majesty at Potsdam. Meanwhile the newly-married Crown Princess lived alone in her husband's palace* in Berlin, and in summer for a short while at Schönhausen, Frederick I.'s old shooting-box turned into a country house, and the same which afterwards became her own property.

* The palace of the present Crown Prince. It was built, says Nicolai (*Beschreibung von Berlin*, i. 162), 'probably by Nering' in the time of the Great Elector for Field-Marshal Schomberg. Schomberg leaving Brandenburg in 1688, to follow William of Orange to England, the house then became the residence of the Governor of Berlin. In 1734 Frederick William dislodged the governor, and having caused the building to be enlarged, gave it to the Crown Prince. After his accession, Frederick gave it to his brother the Prince of Prussia. After the Prince's death in 1758, his widow continued to live in the house till her death in 1780. Their grandson Frederick William III., as prince royal and as king, lived in it for nearly fifty years. It has been added to again and again.

I wonder whether Schomberg ever actually *lived* in it. As he was only eighteen months in the service of the Elector, if the house was not begun till after his arrival, they must have built very fast to enable him to take possession.

By the spring of 1736 the new buildings were so far finished that Frederick himself, to his great delight, was able to stay at Rheinsberg. He spent a part of the early summer there and gave a glowing account of the 'enchanted region and of the sedentary life that he led in it, spending his time in reading, writing, and music, observing moderation, however, with respect to this last, *le Diable* [Manteuffel] having warned him that he would injure his lungs if he went on playing as much as he had been used to do.'* In July he was obliged to go with the King to East Prussia, and was kept there and in Berlin afterwards during more than a month. On the 15th of August he was at New Ruppin on his way home and wrote to Suhm :—

'I am going back to my dear solitude, where I shall give course to my studies. Wolff, as you may suppose, will have his corner; M. Rollin will have his hours, and the rest will be devoted to the gods of tranquillity and repose. A certain poet of whom you may have heard, Gresset, is coming to me, and with him the Abbé Jordan, Keyserlingk, Fouquet, and Major Stille. What a fatality separates us, my dear *Diaphane!* Why cannot we see our days flow on together at Rheinsberg in the bosom of truth and innocence?

'Là, sous un Ciel serein, assis au pied des hêtres,
Nous étudions Wolff en dépit de nos Prêtres.

* Seckendorff's *Journal*, p. 148.

Les Grâces et les Ris ont accès en ces lieux,
Sans pourtant excepter aucun des autres Dieux.
Tantôt, quand nous sentons bouillonner notre verve,
Nous chantons en l'honneur de Mars et de Minerve ;
Tantôt, le verre en main, nous célébrons Bacchus,
Et la nuit nous payons nos tributs à Venus.

'Such is the confession I make to you of the life we lead in that happy abode, wherein may it please Heaven long to preserve us.'*

After this Rheinsberg was 'Remusberg,' and the solitude was no longer quite unbroken. It was cheered by the presence of the Crown Princess and her ladies, who joined the Prince in August, 1736. Frederick acknowledged that the society of the 'sex'† was a great resource, and he was, doubtless, sincere in saying so. Whether he liked his wife very much or not, after his years of bachelorhood he was glad of the gaiety and glitter that the ladies brought with them, and of the new shape that they gave to country life; leaving himself just as free and his studies and pursuits just as unhindered as ever they had been.

An important event that unsettled the routine of daily occupations ere these were well begun, was a visit from the King and Queen. Quite early in the summer, before things were in order, Frederick had in deep devotion prayed their Majesties to be the first guests of himself and his

* *Œuvres de Frédéric le Grand.* xvi. 277.

† To Manteuffel. *Œuvres, &c.* xxv. 486.

wife in their own home.* The invitation having been graciously accepted, the visit was paid soon after the return from East Prussia. The programme of amusements for the King was, First Day, hunting; Second, fishing; and Third, pigeon-shooting. The august personages remained, I believe, for the three days, and enjoyed themselves. His Majesty was in great good humour, and then it was, I suppose, that those who were in the secret of the Prince's wishes tried to work themselves into his good graces by working on the King. One of these days, most likely the last day of the visit, is doubtless the occasion Pöllnitz is thinking of when he tells us that—

'Once in the summer of 1736, when the King was dining with the Crown Prince and seemed to be in high spirits, the Herr von Grumbkow seized the opportunity to curry favour with the Prince, with whom he did not stand on the best footing. So he began by praising the splendid dinner, adding jocularly that probably he would not be able to give very many such banquets, as in that case his finances might suffer. On which the King asked his son whether he had debts, and what they amounted to. The Prince did not venture to name a higher sum than 40,000 dollars [£6000], whereupon the King said he would pay them. The Herr von Grumbkow then inquired whether that was to be an augmentation of the Crown Prince's annual revenue. However, Frederick William

* Seckendorff, hearing of the invitation, ill-naturedly, but not quite erroneously, says that the Prince's object in inviting the King 'is to obtain an augmentation of his allowance.'

made no reply to that, but sent his son the next day 40,000 dollars.'*

It can hardly have been on the occasion of this visit that his Majesty's public devotions were so unexpectedly cut short in the town church.† Having come on a Sunday without letting anybody know, to take his children by surprise, and learning at the town gates that public worship had just begun, his Majesty, who was always a very steady church-goer, at once made up his mind to hear sermon first. The psalms and prayers were over, and the preacher, the Reverend John Rossow, had just gone up to the pulpit and given out his text. Catching sight all on a sudden of the King, worshipping firmly on the top of his staff near the door and looking the preacher full in the face with the look of one who was accustomed to being edified at his good pleasure, Herr Rossow, then stricken in years, was so taken aback that he broke quite down and, after a feeble attempt to pick up his thread, faintly faltered out a blessing. His Majesty raised his stick and shook it at him, but without avail. The preacher came down from the pulpit and

* Pöllnitz. *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire des quatre derniers souverains, &c., &c.* Tome ii., p. 323.

† Fontane says it was on Whit Sunday, 1737. Hahnke, on the other hand (quoting from the *MSS. boruss.*), gives the 7th of August, 1737, as the date of the king's second visit. And to the best of my knowledge, all the authorities say that he came but twice.

narrowly escaped being brought before the church courts by his willing hearer, to be dealt with or deposed for 'fear of man.' Forty years of faithful preaching pleaded for him, and soon afterwards he died in peace. He was succeeded, as we are credibly informed, by his son, who held the living for seventy-two years.*

The Court of Rheinsberg did not go to hear Herr Rossow. Frederick himself always rode across to Ruppin on Sundays and read a sermon to the soldiers, generally a translation from some French divine;—Bourdaloue, Massillon, Fléchier, and Saurin being named as his favourites.† At home the Reverend Jean des Champs preached to the Princess and her attendants, of course in French. At that time there were still a good many French Protestants in those parts, the children of refugees who had settled not so much in the town itself as in the villages round about. There were many such colonies in the Mark, each of which formed a congregation and had a regularly appointed minister of their own nation, who preached to them in their

* I should have thought 'grandson,' but the authorities are positive. John Rossow himself held the living for forty-four years. Nearly all the incumbents since the Reformation (of whom between Hennert and Hoppe we can make out the list), have been long-lived.

† Formey. *Souvenirs d'un Citoyen*, i., 37. Formey adds as a proof, certainly a striking one, of Frederick's astonishing powers of memory, that the monarch towards the end of his life used to recall 'long tirades' of those sermons and recite them admirably. It is extremely unlikely that he had ever looked at them in the interval.

own tongue. At Rheinsberg, as it happened, the congregation had never been duly constituted nor the pastor formally appointed, the former proprietors, the Bévilles, having always kept a French chaplain at their own expense, who was expected to care for the souls of his countrymen within his reach.* There was a place of worship in the town, built very likely by the first Béville, where divine service was performed according to the rites of the French Protestant Church. Refugees, we are told, settled in that neighbourhood 'on the chaplain's account.'† This arrangement was continued whilst Frederick was at Rheinsberg. But the French church having been burnt down in the great fire of April, 1740, was never again rebuilt.‡ Frederick's accession taking place a few weeks afterwards, and the Court leaving Rheinsberg, never more to come back permanently, as it turned out, the French service was allowed to fall to the ground and, to the best of my knowledge, was never begun again. The Huguenot population had become so far denationalized as to be able to worship in the tongue of their adopted country.

* Erman & Réclam, &c., vi., 249.

† More refugees had settled in the county of Ruppin than in any other part of the Mark, the devastations of the Thirty Years' War having thinned the population more there than elsewhere. Whole villages were re-peopled by the French. (Erman & Réclam, vi. 165.)

‡ Hoppe. *Chronik von Rheinsberg*, 196.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FRENCH PREACHER.

Jean des Champs translates a work on Logic—And dedicates it to the Prince Royal—Defines the Prince's Organs—Becomes Almoner at Rheinsberg—Loses Favour—Attacks Voltaire—His Philosophy is sold by the Ell—He leaves Brandenburg and settles in England.

THE Reverend Jean Des Champs, the son of a French refugee, was born at Butzow, in the Duchy of Mecklenburg, on the 27th of May, 1709. Having studied for some years at Geneva and afterwards at Marburg under Wolff, he undertook, in fellowship with a brother of his, a French translation of Wolff's 'Logic.' Returning to Berlin he became known, as we understand, to Count Manteuffel, who, it would seem, spoke of him and the translation to the Crown Prince. In 1736 the *Logique* was published under the Prince's auspices, and dedicated to him. The Dedication, which is seven pages long, is of course a panegyric, and in fulsomeness and flattery a little outdoes, perhaps, the ordinary performances of that class. I do not think that Frederick, who was then twenty-four years of age, remarked anything very particular about the flattery, till Suhm and possibly others

called his attention to it, regretting the attack on his modesty. He then also declared it to be outrageous.* Still, in 1737, he invited the author of it to Rheinsberg. In doing so he hoped, doubtless, to gain a valuable addition to the party; a new French element alongside of Jordan and Chasot, and different from either of them. It is more than likely that from the young disciple and interpreter of Wolff, he hoped for a good deal of instruction. Whether it was settled beforehand that Des Champs was to be the stated French preacher, is what I do not know. What is certain is that he did preach to the Court.† It is equally certain that

* After a great deal of the usual sort of thing about Trajan and Augustus, and the age shortly to begin which is to outshine all the bygone ages, Des Champs takes the Prince himself in hand, extols him through a page or two, and then finishes with—'It may be affirmed that the true and the beautiful are in better proportion to the organs of your Royal Highness, or that your Royal Highness has more sympathy with the true and the beautiful than other men have.' On which Suhm in his letter to the Prince remarks reprovingly:—'Putting myself in your place, that is to say, raising myself far above myself by a sense of your sublime qualities, I thought I felt some embarrassment on your account in reading it; not that your Royal Highness with all your virtues is not far above all the praises, all true though too *fade-ment* expressed, of this *Epître*, but because your great modesty absolutely refuses to recognise yourself in your own portrait, and you are the more embarrassed the more the likeness is exact.'

† His function in the household was technically that of 'almoner' (*aumônier*. — Bielfeld, *Lettres, &c.*, i., 75.) I do not suppose that any formal appointment as 'chaplain' either could or did take place. In the Berlin edition of Frederick's Correspondence with Suhm (Vieweg, 1787), there is a note (tome i. p. 133), rather ill-natured in its tone, which tells us that Des

he almost immediately fell utterly out of the Prince's favour. Frederick did not attend his sermons, not having found in him, as it would seem, what he had hoped to find. Yet he did not throw him off either then or afterwards. Des Champs remained at Rheinsberg as long as the Court was there, and after the accession he continued in the new King's household, and was appointed one of the tutors to the two young princes, Henry and Ferdinand, with the express charge of teaching them the elements of Wolff's philosophy. In 1743 he published for their benefit, and dedicated to them, a 'Cours de la Philosophie Wolffienne,' in the form of Letters.* In two of the letters he made an ill-judged attack on Vol-

Champs 'having been connected with the service of the church in Rheinsberg as a candidate and preaching before the court, ascribed to himself the title (*caractère*) of chaplain.' The note, which in other places is very incorrect, is not quite exact here either. We are left in doubt whether the writer means the town church of Rheinsberg, with which Des Champs certainly had nothing to do, or the French place of worship where the 'chaplain' of the château preached to his French countrymen. And what is more, it does not appear that he ever did ascribe to himself 'the title of chaplain.' In his book published in 1743, he calls himself 'Ministre du Saint Évangile à la cour de S. M. le roi de Prusse.' Before going to Rheinsberg, Des Champs in the winter of 1736–7 made a journey to Cassel, and was invested with 'the dignity he had long coveted;'—understood to be that of theological 'Candidat.' At Rheinsberg he did not live in the *Schloss;* Jordan and he were the only members of the household who had quarters of their own in the town.

* *Cours Abrégé de la Philosophie Wolffienne, &c., &c., &c.* A Amsterdam & Leipzic, MDCCXLIII.

taire, on the occasion of Voltaire's first visit to Berlin in 1740. What he said was in bad taste and stupid (. . . . 'he has been here a few days only, but too long for his reputation,' &c.), but it was in still worse taste *à propos de rien* to fall foul of a guest of his Majesty's, and, as all the world knew, a much honoured guest. He sent the King a copy of the book, though 'he was in some doubt as to its reception.' In a few days he received a civil acknowledgment, which he took for a sign of returning favour.* The King had most likely sent his thanks without looking into the volume, or knowing anything about its contents, for the next time he took notice of it and its author, he fell into a different tone. On the 20th of November of the same year (1743), at Keyserlingk's wedding, a new French play called 'Le Singe de la Mode' was performed, of which it was generally and correctly surmised that his Majesty was the author. In this play there is a scene between the young Fool of Fashion and a bookseller, in which the former gives an order for a hundred copies of Des Champs' 'Philosophy,' along with as many of the works of the Abbé Saint Pierre, and thirty of those of Marivaux,† bound in morocco (as these are all to be

* Frederick's letter to Des Champs is still in the possession of the descendants of the latter. It is printed in Courthope's *Life of Daniel Chamier*, p. 68.

† I do not know why or whether Frederick had a special grudge against Marivaux. The Abbé St. Pierre had said that the 'roi belliqueux' was a contradiction to the author of *Anti-machiavel.*

had cheap, having been long in the shop), to fill up 'six ells' of empty room in a new book case. The joke was neither very clever nor in very good taste, but one must own that something of the sort had not been undeserved. It answered the purpose of giving the person concerned to understand that he would do ill to count on a return of favour. More than this I do not suppose that it was intended to do; neither does it appear that Des Champs took it very sorely to heart.* Witty people sold his Philosophy 'by the ell' afterwards, but he went on as before, writing and publishing a good deal. In 1746, 'being unable,' Courthope assures us, 'to obtain the proper remuneration for his services . . . . or any part of the very considerable arrears due to him . . .' (!),† he at length left Berlin. After some stay in Hesse and in Holland, he arrived in England in the spring of 1747. In 1749 he received orders in the Church of England at the hands of the Bishop of Llandaff,

* The note to Suhm's correspondence tells us that Des Champs was *navré*, shut himself up for some days, and then left Berlin without telling anybody. Formey, who ought to have known better, seems to endorse this in his *Souvenirs*. But the fact is that Des Champs, whether 'navré' or not, continued to preach before the court, and did not leave Berlin till three years after this. In 1745 we find him going to Rheinsberg in the suite of the Queen Mother and preaching to her there.

† Courthorpe, &c., pp. 68, &c. Charles Read, in his 'Daniel Chamier' (Paris, 1858), p. 431, falling into a tone often heard, and not amongst Frenchmen only, when the name of Frederick the Great is mentioned, declares that Des Champs had 'beaucoup à souffrir des caprices et de l'ingratitude du Roi.'!

and became the minister of the French Episcopal Church in the Savoy. In 1753 he married Judith, the eldest sister of Anthony Chamier. He was always active as a writer, particularly in periodicals, and often contributed to the *Nouvelle Bibliothèque Germanique* and to Maty's *Journal Britannique*. He also translated Lord Lyttelton's 'Dialogues' and 'Conversion of St. Paul' into French. He died in 1767. His eldest son was left the heir of Anthony Chamier (the last male descendant of Daniel Chamier), on condition of his taking the name. He, John Ezekiel (Des Champs) Chamier, was the father of Frederick Chamier, the novelist, and of others. All the Chamiers of this line now in England are the descendants of Jean Des Champs. Memoirs of his, of which till now only scraps have been published, are still, I believe, in the possession of the family.

CHAPTER VII.

LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE PLATON.

Frederick and his Consort—Their Court—Their Guests—They cultivate Tranquillity—Frederick redeems the Time—But drills his Regiment—And attends to Farming and Gardening—He presents the King with a tall Soldier and a fatted Calf—The King's ill-humour—Frederick's rule of Life—His Meditations.

THE Prince and Princess, and the ladies and gentlemen of their suite, made a party of about fifteen persons. Then there was no lack of visitors, princely and other, even in winter. In February, 1737, Frederick, writing to the Margravine of Bayreuth, says . . . . 'Covers are usually laid for from twenty-two to twenty-four persons . . . . We amuse ourselves with trifles, and give no heed to the things that would render our lives uncomfortable and interfere with our enjoyments. We perform tragedy and comedy, we have balls, masquerades, and music *à toute sauce* . . . . Philosophy holds on her way nevertheless; it is the best foundation to build happiness on.' *

* *Oeuvres, &c.*, tome xxvii., I. p. 46. It is to be noted that, not only at this time but also many years later, and at some of the busiest moments of his life, Frederick, according to his own mood or the taste of his correspondent, had a way of talking

There would sometimes have been more visitors but for the fear of displeasing the King. This or that acquaintance was not invited, or when invited thought it best to stay away, from the same motive.

To the best of our knowledge, Frederick and his Consort at this time seemed to live as happily as other young couples do. There is no hint to be found anywhere of anything like estrangement between them. On the contrary there are traces of the ordinary and natural intercourse. How the husband in his secret heart felt toward the wife whom he had been compelled to marry, we do not know. Outwardly he showed her kindness, and, as could not well be otherwise, whether seeking it or not the god-like youth won the love of the gentle bright-eyed creature beside him. Now and then the heroic temper might boil over rather briskly; but she got used to what she called his 'manières,' and tried not to mind them. She worshipped him doatingly then and all her days. Of course she fell into his ways, and took delight in his pursuits. There are traces of her, I think, sometimes in the turret chamber, looking over his shoulder when he is writing. The gossip of the day, which knew that the marriage had been a forced one and said that appearances were only

about his 'amusements'—reading, fluting, writing, gardening, building, &c.—as if he were the idlest man in the world, and these were the only things that any sensible person could think worth caring about.

being kept up as long as the King lived, does not weigh heavily; indeed, against the evidence from within, does not weigh at all. What else could the gossip of the day have said? It was certainly mistaken when it went on to add that the Prince would put away his wife whenever he was his own master.

The gentle, pretty Princess was no marplot; she seems always to have been ready to take her part in anything that was going on. She had youth on her side, and first-rate health and spirits. An unemployed, unfledged, uncrowned Court, in an out-of-the-way neighbourhood, is always rather keenly set on finding out ways of diverting itself. At Rheinsberg some of the diversions would take a loud ending. Neither the Princess nor anybody else could know that a hundred years later people would like less noise, and even think the noise of their forefathers, when recorded in History, a little shocking. According to the notions of that day, the disturbance was always put a stop to just in the nick of time. Both the master and the mistress of the house, even in young years, had plenty of tact. And there were drags at hand, put there for the very purpose of being fastened to the wheel of society when it had to go down hill. There was, of course, a responsible Embodiment of Behaviour, gentle and grave, able to throw experience into a smile and disapproval into the deepest curtsey, in the person of the *grande maîtresse*, in

this instance the Frau von Katsch. Alongside of her there was an unlucky Colonel von Bredow, a 'horrid' fellow who filled I know not what post; a post that the head of the household would gladly have done away with altogether, on condition of getting rid of the man. His real *raison d'être*, or what was taken for such, could not openly be talked about. He was understood to be the King's 'spy,' and to send reports to Potsdam of everything that went on at Rheinsberg,—reports which were sure to be ill-natured and highly coloured.

We have lists of those who were permanently employed in the Household. The *Maréchal de la Cour*, the man who had the whole internal economy in his hands, was Wolden. He had been appointed to the office at Cüstrin, on the Prince's being let out of confinement, and he continued in it till within a few weeks of the Accession, when he died very suddenly. Of Bredow I have just spoken. Then there were Keyserlingk, Knobelsdorff, Senning, Stille, and Jordan. Some of the officers of the Prince's regiment, Chasot, Wylich, and Buddenbrock, had quarters permanently at Rheinsberg, and only went to headquarters for duty. Others, of whom Rathenow, Kleist, and Schenkendorf are named, were frequent guests. Fouqué, an old friend of Cüstrin days, paid some long visits just at first. The last who came with a view to getting a permanent appointment, only a few months before the establishment was broken up, was Bielfeld.

Some of Frederick's very best friends never came to Rheinsberg at all. Such were Du Han, Camas, Manteuffel, Suhm, and Voltaire ; the last of whom did pay one visit there, but not till after Frederick's Accession. Their absence was pretty well made up for by a steady and abundant correspondence.

Frederick was very fond of calling his friends by fancy names, these being sometimes classical renderings of the real name, sometimes supposed illustrations of traits of character. Several of the Rheinsberg set were hardly ever known by their own names. Thus Keyserlingk in the letters always figures as 'Caesarion,' though as an alternative he was also called 'The Swan of Mittau,' from the dull town on the Baltic, near to which he was born. Jordan was 'Hephaestion,' or, for what reason I know not, 'Tindal.' Grumbkow, not a friend but an intimate acquaintance from necessity was 'Biberius' and also 'cher Cassubien.' Suhm was 'Diaphane.' Algarotti was 'The Swan of Padua.' Manteuffel naturally enough figured as 'Diable,' though when directly addressed more often as 'Quinze-Vingt,' which it is very possible he liked better. He is said to have suggested the name himself at a time when Frederick still hung upon his lips, drinking in the wisdom that flowed from them, and desiring to be enlightened by his superior *lumières*. Manteuffel, modestly putting from him all claims to wisdom, protested he had no lights to bestow on anybody, being blind and much in

the dark himself, nothing but a poor *Quinze-Vingt;* —from the well-known Hospital for the Blind in Paris, founded to receive three hundred patients.*

The Princess's ladies were the above-mentioned Frau von Katsch as *grande maîtresse*, and the Demoiselles de Schack and de Walmoden as maids of honour. Other ladies named as constant visitors were Mesdames de Hacke, de Morrien, de Brandt, de Veltheim, and de Kannenberg. Some of these brought their husbands with them. A frequent visitor was the Prince's cousin, the Margrave Henry, afterwards of Schwedt. He was a great friend of Frederick's in those years, but being not lively merely, but headstrong, and uproarious in his manners, and coming sometimes without military leave, he was not always a welcome guest. Another and a better was the Princess's favourite brother Ferdinand, afterwards the heroic Ferdinand of Brunswick. Other princely names occur in due order. Envoys and such diplomatic personages accredited in Berlin, paid their respects on certain occasions at the court of the Heir Apparent. And doubtless very many miscellaneous guests, such as Lord Baltimore with Algarotti in his train, went and came.

They all seem to have enjoyed themselves to their hearts' content. Little is told us of what

* All this was quite independent of the nicknames given to outsiders, of which in the correspondences there are instances many and various.

they said and did, but we feel sure their conversation was very cheerful. In after years, we know that some of themselves thought so, looking back. The Prince was cheerful, and no doubt he did his best to keep up the spirits of the rest. The want of the due number of dollars often acted as a check on his own; that and certain other rubs that made themselves felt from time to time. But even with these drawbacks, it was delightful to keep court at Rheinsberg. As far back as 1734, once when the King was very ill, Frederick had said, 'If my father would only let me live according to my own inclination, I would give my arm to prolong his life for twenty years.' And during these his four years of rusticating, his inclination was practically never interfered with except when he left home. He read a great deal, played a great deal on the flute, and wrote a great many essays and letters and verses in tolerably good French. The pleasures of society, into which he threw himself so merrily, did not hinder him in his pursuits. Perceiving that his early education had been very grievously misdirected, he was bent hard on improving himself; perhaps he had dreams of qualifying himself to take a place of his own some day on the level and not too far to the left of the magnates of Literature. In December, 1737, he writes (to Camas) . . . . 'The account of these four months would not be interesting . . . . You would see on every page a man with his nose glued to his book,

then leaving the book to take his pen, *et celle-là relevée par la traverse.*' And in 1738 (to Du Han) . . . . 'I am buried in my books more than ever I was. I am running after the time which in my youth I so thoughtlessly threw away, and to the best of my power am laying up a store of knowledge and truth.' *

There was a short break in winter when they all went to Berlin for a few weeks to dance; by the middle or end of January they were back in their snowy wastes again. One winter they would seem not to have gone to Berlin at all. Frederick, to his sorrow, had often to go to Ruppin on regimental duty, to Potsdam at certain intervals for Holy Communion, and to Berlin in spring for the grand parades. In autumn some manœuvre in East Prussia or elsewhere would call him away for weeks together. He chafed at such breaks very sore. Thus in January, 1737, after

* *Œuvres, &c.*, xvi. 144, xviii. 279. It was, of course, very much more his father's fault than his own that his youth had been mis-spent. He had not, I suppose, more wasted time to lay to his charge than other boys have. But his father had deliberately denied him the blessing of a liberal education. And for want of that 'harmony of a classical training' after which he always more or less consciously longed, and 'which every one who has attained to self-knowledge would fain possess' (Pröhle: *Friedrich der Grosse und die deutsche Literatur*, p. 3), he all his life long failed quite to attain to the highest insight in Literature. Far on in life, it may be that he did find out, as Pröhle says, that the French classics were, after all, but a 'soft moonlight reflected from the sun of Greek and Roman classicality.'

dancing for about a month in Berlin, we find him by the King's commands taking the sacrament at Potsdam on his road home. In the autumn of the same year he is sent for again, and when he gets home he writes to Camas:—

'A journey, a priest, and a communion, are three reasons, the least of which might be an apology for my delay in answering you. In the King's train and in the company of my brother, I have been relieving myself on the good faith of a priest of a burden of sins which did not weigh very heavy, but from which I am now said to be delivered. After which the King went to Wustershausen, and your friend to Rheinsberg.'

Each day not spent in the turret chamber was a day lost. Days spent in drilling soldiers were lost indeed. And yet not only did he study tactics, but the pains he also took as colonel of his regiment may well be the admiration of military men. Personally he disliked Prince Leopold of Dessau as much as possible, but, regarding him as one of the greatest generals of the time, he willingly became his scholar, travelling to Stettin with him to take practical lessons in fortification, and corresponding with him on tactics. Once Prince Leopold sends him six plans, each ten feet long and six broad, with written explanations, showing how a fortified town is to be besieged, and Frederick sends a minute description of them, with a sketch and criticisms of his own, to Camas, (thanking him

in the same letter for some cheeses and pears). Another letter to Camas is full from beginning to end of the *petit service*, '*appointés*,' '*gratifications*,' '*les chemises des appointés*,' '*souliers*,' &c.* And yet in words he fretted at drill like any subaltern. It is funny to compare what he says about it at this time with his orders and reproofs in later years. In June, 1737, being in Berlin on parade, he cries out, 'We are up to our ears in parades. We are throwing away our time, which will never return, on mere nothings.' Another year when the King is out of sorts and cross, finding fault with everything, Frederick lets us know that he is going to throw an odd handful or two of flour on the soldiers' heads for the parade; which will put *that* all right. He then heaves a sigh, which is made up partly of vexation, partly also of something very like contempt for Martinets in the highest places. One who is steadily gazing upwards, looking for the coming of Truth, the heavenly maid, with a lighted torch in her hand and other emblems of promise about her person, and who is holding himself in readiness to give her a suitable welcome, will be apt to under-rate everyday pursuits and those who take delight in them. Still, if he does his duty in times when giants are in demand, he can be a dangerous neighbour to tall shepherds. The following letter from Frederick to his father is dated Ruppin, 1732. . . .

* *Œuvres, &c.*, xvi., 147, 153.

. . . 'I have seen in the recruiting regulations that when officers know of tall fellows, above six feet, they are to give information about them, if they are not to be had by fair means. Not far from Perleberg, in the territory of Mecklenburg, there is a shepherd who is said to be quite six feet four. He is not to be had by fair means, but when he is herding his sheep he is alone in the field, and with a couple of officers and a couple of non-commissioned officers he could be got. He is the same the hussars were once sent out after. Some of my officers know that part of the country very well. I wished therefore to inquire whether my Most Allgracious Lord Father commands that he shall be taken or not. . . . . I shall see that it is done quietly and without any fuss being made, for I know the *Amtmann* of the district, and I can stop *his* mouth.'

The King in reply desires to know whose estate (which Mecklenburg proprietor) the shepherd belongs to. On which point the Prince in his next gives information, adding that in the summer the man is often day and night with his sheep for six weeks together, not many miles from the frontier; moreover, that the *Amtmann* is the brother-in-law of Cramer the *Kriegsrath*, 'and will play the fellow into our hands.' Thereupon his Majesty issues the necessary orders to Cramer, bidding him tell his brother-in-law to lure the fellow somehow to the frontier, 'where he can be taken quietly and without any fuss.' Which, I doubt not, was all done as the King commanded.*

* *Friedrichs des Grossen Briefe an seinen Vater.* Berlin, 1838.

Frederick wrote his letters to his father in German—not any more correctly as to spelling than his French letters to other people. Made up in great part of assurances of submissiveness, they contain for the rest little but regimental reports, notices of what was doing on his farms or on the holdings of the peasants, with proposals for improvements, and pretty often humble requests for the gracious acceptance of some fat kitchen delicacy. Of course, they throw no side lights on the writer's daily life. Only once do they break into narrative—on occasion of the visit to Mirow and the return it brought,—which narrative has been done into English already, and with plentiful humour, by Mr. Carlyle.

The hard, unremitting toil which he had been forced to submit to on first being released at Cüstrin, had been gradually lightened. He had had to learn, as a member of various boards, the practical business of administration in its minutest details. Of course, though feeling the work irksome very nearly beyond the power of endurance, he *had* learned what was set before him—very much faster than the King had expected.* The greater part of this sort of work had been lifted from off his shoulders again, but there were still certain affairs connected with

* He had been ordered 'whenever he was not with his regiment' to attend 'all the meetings of the *General-Directorium*, at first merely as a listener. He was to inform himself about

the business of the *Amt*, besides those of the bailiwick, which had to be attended to, and about which the King desired to be regularly informed. (For instance, when new estimates for leases had to be made out, the Prince was ordered to draw them up himself, and in doing so not to depend on the old estimates or on the reports of the persons employed.) Frederick, with his natural gift of concentration, did not even at the first find these things *very* burdensome, and as time wore on they became extremely light;—not at all any more perceptibly interfering with more congenial tasks.

'everything' and make particular inquiry, and when he had any *dubia* he was to read over the reports in his own room, and get the matter on which he had *dubia* thoroughly explained to him. The ministers and the assessors were to show him the reasons for this or that, along with the motives which 'I' (the King) had for ordering this or that to be done. What he was 'principally' to acquaint himself with was everything connected with the excise and the taxes, the leasing out of farms, the levying of duties, the breweries on the farms and in the towns, the water-works, the improvement of the revenue, the accounts—was to be present sometimes when the accounts of the provincial *Domainencassen*, or the salt accounts, were made up,—the boundaries, further, all about commerce, trade, and manufactures, &c. Was to know wherein the *nervus rerum gerendarum* 'really consisted;' and for the second time he was exhorted to get his *dubia* cleared up. He was to learn 'to ask questions,' how questions were put, and which questions ought to be asked and which not. Also he was to read the King's *marginalia*, that he might know what his Majesty was pleased to approve and grant, and what he thought proper to refuse. Inculcating very especially the severest application to agriculture, the King gives as his motive:—That the prince 'may learn how much toil it costs a peasant to gather together as many *groschen* (pence) as make a dollar; to the end that he may be careful of it (money) himself one day.' (Stadelmann, p. 201, 198.)

Soon after taking possession of the estate, he writes :—'As my Father has been so gracious as to bestow Rheinsberg upon me, it would be ungrateful in me if I might not present him with the first-fruits of all that is raised there. Accordingly, I take the liberty of sending a lamb which I have fattened. I heartily desire that my Most All-gracious Father may relish it, and that I may for many years be permitted to present my Most All-gracious Father with my Rheinsberg produce.' The King in return sends the half of a salmon. Another time he thanks Fritz for 'the big calf,' which 'turned out extremely fine.' But he never forgets business. He desires that strict inquiry may be made 'why the inhabitants of the village of Pechlin pay no corn-rents.' Once, when there has been a fire in the town of New Ruppin, his Majesty orders the Crown Prince to report, 'who did not do his duty on the occasion, and whether there is room for improvement in the fire-regulations.' When the Prince proposes to set up a brick-kiln at Strobeck, the King wishes to know first whether there will be sufficient demand for the bricks. In like manner, to a proposal for clearing the fields belonging to the villagers of Lüderstädt of the trees that are still standing, his Majesty, whilst giving his consent, directs:—'You must see what sort of wood it is, and how it can be turned to account.' In October, 1738, the Prince writes that his most all-gracious father will be surprised to hear of his felling wood

in a *Heide*, 'but more reasons than one induced me. In the first place, the wood was old, and if I had not felled it, it would have rotted away; in the second place, I wanted it for the offices in a farm-steading I am laying out at Sonnenberg; and, besides, there are plenty of young trees which are still too crowded, and will spoil if they are not thinned.' The King has no objections :—'You did right, wood being abundant in those parts.' *

* Stadelmann. *Friedrich Wilhelm I., in seiner Thätigkeit für die Landescultur Preussens*, pp. 198, 200, 206, &c.

Frederick very gladly seconded his father in promoting horticulture. The King did not share the Prince's turn for raising flowers, but frowned on it as an extravagance; but father and son were alike bent on furthering the cultivation of fruits and vegetables. As to vegetables, they were then a new art in Brandenburg, introduced by the French refugees, along with a great many other kinds of industry. It is extraordinary at the present day to be told of the dearth of common pot-herbs in Northern Germany down to the end of the seventeenth century; in some places quite to the north very much later still, as we know from Klöden's 'Recollections.' Some kinds were sent from abroad dried, but of fresh vegetables only cabbages were known, and 'coarse turnips, and a few other roots.' The French settlers, in cultivating them, had, at first and for long, to cope with many difficulties and some opposition. People said, of course, that those things would not grow in Brandenburg. At first the things did fail sometimes, and the attempts had to be repeated. When they were successful, the Frenchmen were made fun of for eating such things; 'mangeurs de haricots,' say Erman and Réclam, was for a while a *sobriquet* equivalent to that of 'mangeurs de grenouilles,'—*Paddenschlucker* (from *Padde*, Scotice puddock), the Berlin street-boy's nickname for a Huguenot. By degrees, incredulity gave place to mild curiosity. When the French doctor Le Clos had got some artichokes to grow at his country house at Friedrichsfelde, old King Frederick I. and his court drove out there to look at them. And, in the course of

The Prince's intercourse with his father neither was nor could be natural and loving; King Frederick William did much to discourage its ever becoming so. His dealings by his son at their times of meeting, went far to enhance the latter's liking for a place of retirement in which he was left to himself. We wonder the less at his not caring a great deal for visits to the gay world, when we know how many scoldings were mixed with his cup of amusement. Not only by his position, but quite as much by the events of his younger years, he was hindered from openly murmuring at what it was very hard to bear; but the irritation under unfair treatment found a vent in private letters, particularly in those to Camas. It is with much sympathy one reads such outpourings as these of January, 1739, from Berlin of course (to Camas):—

. . . 'The King's humour has turned to sour, and his hatred of me has shown itself under so many different shapes that, if I were not what I am, I would have demanded my dismissal long ago. I would rather beg my bread elsewhere than feed on the chagrins I must

time, the natives themselves 'ate artichokes, asparagus, and cauliflowers, and thought them very good.' Frederick William, with his keen eye for the value of every branch of industry that made the soil productive, was urgent that kitchen gardening should be prosecuted with energy. He had been accustomed himself till then to 'thank God for every plateful of hop salad' that was set on the table. And now the new salads *à la Dahuron* at the French gardener's at Charlottenburg were within the reach of the ordinary citizen. (Erman & Réclam, vi. 294.)

swallow here. The King's *acharnement* in crying me down in public and in private, is not a thing people whisper to each other, it is the talk of the town; everybody is the witness of it, and everybody talks about it. . . The day of my departure must come nearer, of course. I confess, notwithstanding any stoical indifference, that I wish much for the moment which will take me away from a place where I am barely tolerated, and that against the will of some one, where I am hated, where it were wished ——but let us not divine the thoughts of others. It is not for us to try the hearts. Let us carry our charity to the length of putting to the reckoning of bile what others less scrupulous might lay to the charge of the heart of those who persecute them. Living faith is not my chief excellence, but Christian morals are none the less the rule of my life.'*

In these last words he touches on what has been called the question of his religious opinions. A year or two before this, just about the time of his settling at Rheinsberg, he had made some attempts to gain light on the evidences of the Christian revelation. He had discussed points connected with them in his correspondence with Beausobre and Achard, two worthy French preachers in Berlin, though without ever coming to a persuasion that the teaching of these divines was unassailable. One fragment of a letter to Achard will show his earnestness in seeking instruction and at the same time his acuteness in criticism.

* *Œuvres, &c.*, xvi., 160, 162.

(Rheinsberg, June, 1736). . . . 'I confess that there was one deduction in your sermon, which I did not quite understand, and which I think would stand in need of commentary to make it clear and simple. You were speaking of the fanaticism which might have been the determining cause why the apostles adhered to the Saviour's commission, and, if I am not mistaken, you made use of this expression, "Whoever says that the apostles were fanatics is a fanatic himself." In the feeling of authority given you by the pulpit, you pronounced these words pretty boldly, and your flock, taking it on your word, asked no other reason, but in the professor's chair that would not be a conclusion, in my opinion. You ask me to give you subjects for two sermons which you are going to work out for my benefit and deliver in my presence. I am immensely obliged to you, and anxious as I am to make all things tend towards a certain end from which I can derive benefit, I shall beg you to preach first on the text, "Ces paroles nous ont été données de Dieu,"* no more, and to establish the possibility, the signs, and the truth of revelation; and secondly, on the words, "The cross of Christ is to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness," and to prove first the necessity for his mission, the truth of the oracles which make it known to us, and, if I may so speak, the reason which determined the counsel of God to choose this redemption rather than any other, and for your flock the application of the duties which follow from faith in Christ. I confess that I expect much edification from the trouble that you are going to take; for I have the misfortune of having very feeble faith, and I am

* I do not know where his Royal Highness found this version of 2 Timothy iii., 16. The second quotation he gives correctly enough, according to the ordinary French translations.

obliged to fortify it often with good reasons and solid arguments.'*

Of that which the generation that came after him called, and taught their descendants to call, 'Nature,' Frederick of course knew nothing. He was fond of flowers, and naturally he liked green trees and fresh air and warm sunshine; but in those fair sights he could not guess at the vision lurking, which when seen—often but fitfully and dimly seen—was to mould and guide all the re-awakening imagination of his countrymen. It was not *that* he mused on in his walks in the gardens and woods, or in his rides to the garrison and back. He did muse long and fervently on the older and sterner Mystery of man's life—to which the Mystery of Nature has come as a sunny and playful antithesis—and puzzled himself sorely to pierce it. His musings ended, as is known, in that settled sense of the infinite littleness of man and man's aims which for ever after lay at the basis of all his ethical convictions, and from time to time in his intenser moods broke out, usually under the same mournful formula, 'C'est peu de chose que l'homme!' As in the Ode to Maupertuis—

> O Maupertuis, cher Maupertuis,
> Que notre vie est peu de chose!
> Cette fleur, qui brille aujourd'hui,
> Demain se fane à peine éclose, &c.

In his letters to his favourite sister, the *refrain*

* *Œuvres, &c.*, xvi., 116, 117.

returns again and again and again. In March, 1747, he writes:

'Believe me, health is the most precious thing we have in this world. There is an infinitude between a man who is ill and a man who is well; that is what I am sadly making the experience of just now. You think feebly, you work badly, and you do still worse if some petty intestine gets out of order, or some little valve refuses to do its duty. We are *bien peu de chose*. Our hold on life is but by a hair, and yet to hear us anybody would say that Nature had provided us with bodies of brass. We make the best we can of our mechanism; and our imagination, which scours the country and rushes headlong into the future, embraces whole ages and leaves a sluggish and languishing body behind her to perish.'

And in the autumn of the same year:—

'I mourn for poor Du Châtelet. I fear greatly lest General Borcke should end in the same way. *C'est peu de chose que l'homme*. I know not how his vanity can delude him, nor do I understand how he can presume so on his existence, or on what it is that he founds his chimerical pretensions for the future. . . . But one moment of pleasure, one puff of gaiety, is enough to rub the sponge over all the ill that we have experienced. Our happiness arises from our inconstancy and our lightheartedness. We are such creatures as it pleased the Author of Nature to form us.'

In this instance he seems in all soberness to have thought that the insignificance of the parts must needs lead to the insignificance of the whole. And with those of his century, and of many in other

centuries, he was very far from seeing in the 'vanity' and 'imagination' and 'chimerical pretensions' anything but elements of man's nature far more beggarly even than the 'little valve' (*soupape*); least of all did he dream of taking such feeble and frail faculties themselves as tremulous, though incorruptible, witnesses for the reality of man's relations to—The Unknown.*

* It is comparatively easy for us, with the records of that time in our hands and knowing the end from the beginning, to see this episode of Four Years at Rheinsberg in an ideal light. But even at the time it would appear to have struck some observers and worked on their imagination. Formey, for one, wrote a poem on it, entitled 'La République de Platon,' and published it in his *Mercure & Minerve*, a literary journal he was editing, for which he received a very flattering letter from Jordan, who was at Rheinsberg, with many complimentary expressions on the Prince's part. (*Souvenirs d'un Citoyen*, tome i., p. 106. I have never seen the poem. Jordan's letter is very likely still extant in Formey's correspondence — consisting of 20,000 letters in manuscript—now in the Berlin Library. Des Champs was another of his Rheinsberg correspondents.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FLUTE.

The Prince does not hunt—Heyne teaches him to sing, and Quantz to play on the Flute—Graun and Benda and the Orchestra—King Frederick William and Pepusch—*Porco primo and Porco secondo—Flauto solo.*

FREDERICK was not a sportsman. Very early in life, as we are told, when he had to follow the King to the chase whether he liked it or not, he used to have a flute in his pocket, which, breaking off from the hunt at a safe moment with one or two chosen friends, and sitting down in a lonely place, he would pull out and pipe on till the woods rang again. His father in real vexation stormed and raged, but without ever feeling sure that he had put a stop to these effeminacies. Being indeed well aware that in this, and in weightier matters, his warnings had not gone deep, when he felt himself dying Frederick William gave his best dogs to Prince Leopold of Dessau, his 'son having no use for dogs.' But though he did not himself shoot, Frederick did not hinder other people from doing so. There was good sport at Rheinsberg, and many of the guests, even some of the household, took advantage of it.*

* The indifference about field sports seems to have been rather the rule than the exception amongst the sons of Frede-

To some extent Frederick William had himself to blame for his son's love for the practice of music. When the Prince was but a young boy, the King had put him under the care of Heyne,* the organist of the Cathedral, to be taught to sing 'Marot's Hymns.' But Heyne, like a conscientious teacher, had, in addition to the practice of psalmody, given his pupil a long course of regular lessons in thorough bass. This was early and good training.† The famous lessons on the flute under Quantz, date from 1728. It was in that year that Frederick William, taking his eldest son with him, paid his visit to the King of Poland, in Dresden. There, for the very first time in his life, the young Prince heard and saw an opera. The King of Poland, returning the visit in May of the same

rick William I. Years afterwards, at Potsdam, Frederick mentions that Ferdinand, the youngest, 'hunts for the whole family.'

* Heyne (whose name is also spelt Hayne and Hein), had in his youth played the violin in old King Frederick's band. Dismissed like the rest at the accession of Frederick William, he had afterwards got the post of organist and schoolmaster to the congregation of the *Dom*. It was in this capacity that he gathered together not only some of his scholars, but also other persons who had a turn for music, and trained them to sing in parts. King Frederick William riding one day past the schoolhouse (in the *Brüderstrasse*) just as the practising was going on, was mightily struck with it, and the upshot was that the organist was commanded to instruct the Crown Prince in psalmody. (Ledebur. *Tonkünstler-Lexicon Berlins*, p. 228.) Ledebur remarks that this singing-class of Heyne's may be looked on as the earliest instance of a *Gesangverein* in Berlin, the germ of very many such in later times.

† Nicolai. *Anekdoten von König Friedrich II.* Drittes Heft, p. 252. Also Preuss in the *Vossische Zeitung* of January and February, 1862.

year, brought some of his musicians in his train, whose performances were much admired at the Prussian court.* It was either then, or a few weeks later in the same summer, that Quantz played before the Queen of Prussia and gave such delight to her and the Crown Prince, that at the latter's entreaty, and by her Majesty's connivance, the

* In his train was Locatelli the violinist, who was eager to be heard at court in Berlin. After it had been decided on that he was to play, a difficulty arose about an orchestra to accompany him. There *was* no orchestra, none at least but the bassoons mentioned further on, and with the bassoons it is said he did his best. He had on a blue velvet coat brocaded with silver, far "too fine for a fiddler," and looked just 'like a *Kriegsrath*,' said the King of Prussia; who, however, sent him the next morning a present of twenty dollars. Locatelli magnificently gave the twenty dollars to the messenger, at which Frederick William, when he heard it, was naturally very angry, particularly angry that a *fiddler* should make such a present. But on the second evening, having taken counsel in the meanwhile with King August, he made him a present, it is said, of a golden box filled with ducats. It does not appear that Quantz was in King August's train (although several writers would make it out that he was, amongst others Quantz's namesake and latest biographer Albert Quantz, in his little book '*Leben und Werke des Flötisten Johann Joachim Quantz.*') Some weeks after the King of Poland's return home, in July of the same year, he sent four of his musicians, viz. Quantz, Weiss, Pisendel and Buffardin, to Berlin, to play before the Queen of Prussia at Monbijou, King Frederick William being absent on a tour to East Prussia. This was doubtless the fulfilment of a gallant promise made by King August to the Queen on the occasion of his visit, in the course of which he had had opportunity of seeing and pitying her forlorn estate with respect to music. (For which see Preuss in the *Vossische Zeitung* of 12th January, 1862.) The Margravine of Bayreuth also says: 'Le roi de Pologne envoya les plus habiles de ses virtuoses à la reine, &c.' (*Mémoires*, tome i., p. 131.)

musician was engaged to teach the Prince. The first lessons were given forthwith, and Quantz came, it is said, again and again, remaining in Berlin for several weeks at a time in continual attendance on his Royal Highness. It seems wonderful that this could go on without the King's knowledge and against his will, this and other things, under the eyes of those whom he had set to observe and report. One lesson, as we know, was terribly interrupted; the silk dressing-gowns were burned, and Quantz shook with terror for an hour in the wood closet,—or was it in the *Ofenloch*, the hole in the wall behind the old-fashioned stove?—as well he might!*

Frederick's imprisonment put a stop to all this, but as soon as he had become his own master again, the lessons were resumed. In Rheinsberg, we are told that Quantz paid two visits pretty regularly every year. Frederick would have been glad to secure his services all the year round, but the salary he was able to offer being most likely a small one, —the Queen, it is said, offered eight hundred dollars—Quantz could never at that time succeed in 'obtaining permission' to quit the service of the court of Saxony.

It is hardly possible to exaggerate, but it is difficult to picture to one's self, the poverty of the Prussian court and capital, during the reign of

* Nicolai, vi., 145–9.

Frederick William I., in every refined enjoyment, recreation, and amusement. To take music as an instance: there was, generally speaking, except in church and on the parade, literally *no* music. It need hardly be said that there was no opera or any other kind of public musical entertainment. Only it is told that the Queen had 'a little band' in her service. At very rare intervals some foreign singer found his or her way to Berlin, was heard once at court, and getting no encouragement to stay longer (the Queen was very willing but had it not in her power to offer encouragement), went somewhere else. On the death of old King Frederick I., the Royal orchestra, *i.e.* the private band, which played during dinner, &c., had been at once dismissed, *i.e.* paid off, without pension or other ceremony of any kind whatever, so that the members of it were scattered through foreign lands in search of employment, or forced, some of them, to work for their bread 'as day-labourers' at home. The only exception made had been in favour of a huge fellow of the name of Pepusch, who was big enough to be put into the regiment of Potsdam giants to lead the hautboys. In like manner, the 'fifty-four Court trumpeters and drummers,' after doing duty for the last time at the old King's funeral, had been also, quite without any form or ceremony whatever, or question asked, enrolled as common troopers in different regiments of cavalry.

This state of things was not to the Crown

Prince's mind, but he in vain implored his father, particularly after the visit in Dresden, to 'have Operas' in Berlin. The King peremptorily said, No! Thus the flutings and lessons in fluting were carried on in private, till, having settled in a home of his own, with some small part of the freedom implied by marriage and expressly bargained for on occasion of *that* marriage, the Prince could follow his bent as far as his means allowed. Even at Ruppin he had musicians in his employment. At Rheinsberg he had a tolerably complete band. Hennert gives us the names of fifteen of the members of it, with the instrument of each. There are seven violins, including the brothers Graun and the brothers Benda. To bring the strength up to something like concert pitch, the servants took part on certain occasions. Schneider mentions that in the accounts of the Rheinsberg household (which are still to the fore), there figure 'six lackeys for musical entertainments.' We, with our modern ideas, naturally ask whether these were musicians in the disguise of lackeys, or lackeys trained to play on the fiddle? At that day the question would hardly have been put. The Six, doubtless, were very much what the account-book defines them to have been, —hired to play and, when not playing, to make themselves otherwise useful. All musicians in the service of German princes in those days, wore livery. A picture of a member of old King Frederick's band just mentioned, in the livery in which they

played at dinner, is still extant.* At the same period, Duke William Ernest of Weimar loved to listen to the performances of 'sixteen well-trained musicians in Heyduque livery,' of whom it is believed that Sebastian Bach was one.† We are not obliged to suppose that all these alternately fiddled and waited at table; but, when the means were narrow, and the ends had to be pulled if they were to be made to meet, nothing could have been less out of the way than to turn servants to account according to their capabilities. Fifty years and more after this, and in the very same place, Prince Henry, who had not only an orchestra but a theatre and an operatic company, and whose means were far from being in proportion to his magnificent tastes, gave orders that a turn for music and, if possible, some skill in singing or in playing on some instrument, were to be looked for in hiring domestics for his household. These, thus hired and having some such turn or skill, were thenceforward trained to take their parts in the orchestra or the choir.

It is not to be forgotten that Frederick had also the band of his regiment at his disposal, and needed but to send to Ruppin for it when things were going to be done on a great scale. Schneider thinks that the above number of 'six' lackeys was far under the mark, and entered in the account-books

* Schneider. *Geschichte der Oper.* p. 43.

† Spitta. *Johann Sebastian Bach.* i. 377.

only to hoodwink the King, who looked at the accounts now and then, and would have refused to confirm them had the outlay 'for musical entertainments' been still more outrageous.

His Majesty's principle with regard to this was quite simple. He was ready to spend money for music (or anything else) that was 'of use,' but not a farthing for mere enjoyment. He laid out considerable sums of money for peals of bells for churches in Berlin and Potsdam, and he also actually founded a musical academy at Potsdam (!)—a training school for regimental fifers, in connection with the asylum for soldiers' orphans. It was the cheapest way to supply the army with bands. I believe it still exists. At first Pepusch was put in charge of it. But the King hearing afterwards that a subject of his own of the name of Sydow, having gone to London to study English and Scotch music, had attained to great proficiency in that branch of the art, his Majesty wrote to Borcke, his ambassador in London, to make inquiries about Sydow. The ambassador's reply is printed in the *Neue Musikzeitung* for 1861, page 403. He reports that he has seen Sydow and interrogated him concerning his 'Operas and music after the Scottish Manner (*nach dem Schottländischen Gusto*),' and that he is causing sundry of these pieces to be transcribed and will send them as specimens, '*viâ* Hamburgh' (the sea-route being cheaper for parcels, very likely). He adds that Sydow's music 'is performed and highly

esteemed here (in London), not so much in entire operas, but rather in the English afterplays or dumb comedies which they call Pantomimes.' The report was favourably received, and apparently so were the specimens, for in the long run Sydow was brought to Potsdam to train the orphans 'after the Scottish manner.'

When works of necessity had been attended to, if it was then found that any sort of 'entertainment' naturally resulted from them, or was to be had into the bargain, Frederick William was very willing to take advantage of it. In the long autumn or winter evenings at Potsdam he used often to command the attendance of the band of the Potsdam giants, under their leader, Godfrey Pepusch. The King then sat by himself at the one end of a long room, and Pepusch and his men, with their wind instruments and the proper desks and candles, took their stand at the other end and bassooned as best they might. They generally blew selections from Handel's operas. The King sometimes fell asleep, and then the musicians, to lighten their work and have done the sooner, would leave out an aria or two. But his Majesty, it is expressly stated, 'was not to be trusted;' if he was only half asleep the transition would rouse him up, and then with a loud 'You've left out' so and so, humming the first notes, he sent them back. If he fell fast asleep, and it happened to strike him on awaking that the concert had been too short, he would sometimes make them go back

to the very beginning and play the whole thing over again.*

The following story has been told before; but as it is one of the few authentic anecdotes from the youthful years of Frederick the Great, it may be told here again.

If Frederick William at these performances of wind instruments did not himself name the piece, it fell to Pepusch to choose it, who, therefore, now and then gave compositions of his own. Once, the *motif* having been suggested to him by some story which had been told in the *Tabagie*, he composed a movement of six pigs on as many bassoons,—the parts headed *Porco Primo*, *Porco Secondo*, &c., each of them squealing and grunting by the rules of the strictest thorough bass—and performed it in the presence of his Majesty. The King held his belly for laughing, and caused the composition to be repeated evening after evening. These repetitions were still going on when the Prince Royal came to Potsdam for the spring drills. Seeing Pepusch crossing the parade ground one morning, his Royal Highness sent for him and, telling him that he had heard a great deal about a new piece of his in six parts, requested the *Herr Kapellmeister* to have it performed in his presence that very afternoon. Pepusch, who dreaded the Prince's tongue, and

* Nicolai, ii., 152. What comes next is also taken from Nicolai. His anecdotes are always trustworthy.

knew that the Potsdam bassoons and their leader often had the worst of it in that coterie,—as the Rheinsberg flutings were pulled to pieces, but with less wit, in the *Tabagie*,—did not at all like the commission and tried to back out of it. He assured his Royal Highness that it was but a trifle, not worthy of his attention, &c., but to no purpose. His Royal Highness stuck to his request in such a manner that it could not be refused, and went home to order the attendance of his household and a few other friends at the sextett. In the afternoon a pretty large party assembled, six music stands were set in readiness, and at the appointed hour Pepusch arrived followed by seven musicians. He laid the scores of six parts on the stands and then, with a seventh sheet of music in his hand, looked round about him, slightly embarrassed. At that the Prince himself stepped forward and very graciously inquired whether the '*Herr Kapellmeister* wished for anything?' 'There is a music stand awanting,' replied Pepusch. 'I thought,' said the Prince, 'there were only six pigs in your piece.' 'Quite true, your Royal Highness!' returned the composer, 'but there has come a little sucking pig in addition,—*flauto solo!*'

Frederick himself told the story to Quantz many years afterwards, and added,—'The old fellow had taken me in after all; and I had to send somebody to speak him fair into the bargain, else he

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might have produced the sucking pig to my father.'*

When King Frederick William came to Rheinsberg, he had no objections whatever to listen to the musicians in the evening, at least as long as they performed nothing of Telemann's; Telemann, one of the most prolific composers of the period, having, as his Majesty happened to know, set to music words of Erdmann Neumeister's, one of the most prolific hymn-writers of the period, but a violent and irrepressible Lutheran polemic, who preached and wrote against both Calvinism and Crypto-calvinism.

There is little to tell about Frederick's concerts or those who took part in them; even less in these than in after years. Quantz and Frank Benda have both left lives of themselves in their own handwriting, very entertaining narratives of early

* Godfrey Pepusch was a relation (it is not quite certain whether a brother or not) of our own Dr. John Christian Pepusch, so famous once for his musical learning and the Beggars' Opera. In 1704, Godfrey, then still in the service of Frederick I., paid a visit to England, and gave a concert in London with the help of 'seven young musicians whom he had brought over' with him. (Burney, History of Music, iv., 633.) Not the same seven, I dare say, who waited on Prince Frederick with the sucking pig thirty years later. In the glorious days of Frederick I., Godfrey, with leave to travel and give concerts in foreign parts, hardly foresaw himself turned into a Potsdam Giant in the decline of life. On the accession of Frederick the Great, he was probably pensioned. He died at a great age in 1750. (Ledebur; *Tonkünstler-Lexicon*, S. 413.)

adventure, but they say hardly a word about Rheinsberg; which, indeed, writing for publication as they did during Frederick's lifetime, could not very well be otherwise. The most distinguished of the band as a composer was the younger Graun. In Hennert's list he figures as a first fiddle, and I dare say he did fiddle, but his real business at Rheinsberg was to sing tenor. He was at Brunswick in 1733 as first tenor (having received his musical training in Dresden), and sang so splendidly in his own 'Timareta' and Handel's 'Parthenope,' on occasion of the Crown Prince of Prussia's wedding, that the latter 'begged him' of the Duke of Brunswick. He came to Ruppin in 1735, and at once relieved Frank Benda, who till then, having still a pretty fair tenor, as he tells us, had had 'to sing a couple of airs every evening.' Thenceforward, Graun sang the airs and also composed many of them. Whilst at Rheinsberg he composed about fifty pieces of vocal music (*Kammerkantaten*), each of these consisting generally of two recitativos with accompaniment and two arias. For the most of these the Crown Prince wrote the words in French and had them translated into Italian. All the while, he studied hard the principles of musical composition under Graun's guidance.

In those days Frederick with Knobelsdorff and Graun used to talk over the grand Opera that they were to have in Berlin in time coming, and lay the plans for it. When the time had come, and Frederick

had mounted the throne, and the opera was coming, Graun was sent to Italy to look out for singers. In the course of his journey he sang a good deal himself, and was much applauded in all the greater Italian cities. After his return he composed quite regularly two operas a year, till the beginning of the Seven Years' War. But the worth of his operas, and his own pleasure in the production of them, were sadly interfered with by King Frederick's resolve to reign in musical composition as in everything else. The Conqueror had come to look on his old master as a mere instrument for carrying out his ideas, and he suggested, directed, commanded, blamed, modified, changed, and cancelled, till little was left but a continual sameness from which originality and invention could not in the nature of things but keep aloof. Graun's best works were the 'Te Deum' for the battle of Prague in 1756, and the 'Tod Jesu' in 1755; in the writing of both of which he was left to himself. The last-mentioned has become a household word in Berlin. It is still performed regularly every year in Passion Week to a crowded audience. Graun died in 1759.

Quantz, who had refused to come before, came gladly after Frederick's accession; the temptations held out being irresistible. He was offered what was at that time an immense salary, besides sumptuous payment for each composition and each flute, as well as perfect freedom, *i.e.*, subjection to no

superior, and obligation to no sort of public performance.

Frederick after his accession 'kept up' his music just as eagerly as before. The chief members of the old Rheinsberg band, their numbers swelled from time to time by new additions, remained with him till one by one they died. Till near the end of his life he had his 'concert' every afternoon, on which occasions he himself generally played three pieces with accompaniment. Quantz alone composed for him two hundred and ninety nine concerts, and died at the middle of the three hundredth.* He was the only composer with whom Frederick never interfered, but, on the other hand, the style of Quantz's composition was gravely modified by a consideration for the King's skill and predilections as a performer. No one, then, will wonder at being told that there is a certain monotony in the three hundred concerts.† Quantz was in all respects a privileged person. He was the only one permitted to cry 'Bravo!' and, what was more, to cough and clear his throat in token of disapproval.

The very few other persons ever privileged to hear his Majesty play were of course very loud indeed

* Frederick himself completed this concert with an allegro of his own, as Nicolai tells us, 'quite in Quantz's spirit.' The score (No. 300 in C minor) was some years ago generously bestowed by the Emperor William on Albert Quantz, the lateral descendant and biographer of Johann Joachim.

† Burney thought him 'frequently common and insipid.' (*Tour through Germany*, &c., vol. ii., p. 232.)

in some form of Bravo! permissible in courtly circles and intended to reach the royal ear in a roundabout way. They praised particularly the *adagio*, as being far finer than that of any known professional player. I do not suppose, however, that Frederick ever became a really first-rate amateur. It is known from a joke of Emmanuel Bach's that he was 'arbitrary' even in beating time; and there are other indications that his playing always sounded more or less kingly in the ears of professional musicians. The very stress laid on the *adagio* throws a slur, I fear, on the *allegro*.

Even in the midst of the most pressing business, at the most threatening crisis, or after some dire calamity, Frederick had his music. When it was impossible to have a whole orchestra at hand, he took care that one musician at least should be within reach to accompany him. Immediately after the accession, Emmanuel Bach was summoned to Charlottenburg to play a duet with his Majesty. In like manner, Frank Benda was ordered to follow the King into the field for the same purpose. On entering Dresden the King, as the most natural thing in the world, at once commanded an opera to be performed, though the very choristers, in their consternation at the turn of events, could hardly find their voices. Throughout, a nature true as steel was *always* (with I know not how few exceptions) true to itself. Behind the thunderclouds the sky was just as blue as ever and, when the storm had passed, was

seen to be so. The continual turnings again to the practice of literature and art as a set-off to the hard toil of reigning, specially these daily flutings, were, I suppose, but tokens, signs, symbols, or, at worst, most imperfect and crude expressions, of a serenity and a harmony in nature's inmost places—

'Deeper than ever the andante dived.'

But with old age came gout and swelled finger-joints; and it was impossible to play on the flute any longer. So at last, one day, he laid it aside, and told Frank Benda that he had 'taken leave of an old friend.' The concluding years were more and more solitary and expressionless.

Frank Benda himself, also an old friend of *pre*-Rheinsberg or Ruppin times, was one of the very last to 'take leave.' He died, after fifty-three years of service, just five months before Frederick the Great, 7th March, 1786.*

* Frederick's concerts still await their historian. Some articles which appeared some years ago in the *Neue Berliner Musikzeitung* —'*Aus der Kapelle Friedrichs des Grossen*'—had at least an excellent Title. The Musical Dictionaries handle such obscure men as Benda, Graun, Quantz, &c., in a very flighty way; they are apt to repeat each other, and rather to multiply errors than correct them.

CHAPTER IX.

THE ORDER OF BAYARD.

Private theatricals—Fouqué takes the part of Arbates—Fouqué's history—His Candles—His quarrel with the Old Dessauer—Fouqué is installed in a canonry—He is taken captive—Frederick presents him with a bottle of wine and a bit of Perigord pie—Fouqué is Grand Master of the Order—He dubs Frederick and the other knights.

To beguile the long winter evenings, the young courtly party very naturally took to acting plays. Those who remember doing the same thing in the days of their youth, will know how interesting the rehearsals must have been. But, like everything else that was taken in hand at Rheinsberg, this harmless diversion was elsewhere the subject of much severe remark. Seckendorff in Berlin, eagerly listening for any gossip that might be going, in hopes of turning it to some evil account, has it in his journal. 'Fouqué,' he says, 'has put it into the Prince's head to act comedies and tragedies, and they have been performing Racine's "Mithridate" in which the Prince himself took a part. When the King hears this he will be very angry.'

I cannot but think that Seckendorff, with the ill-luck that will befall the best of gossips, is far wrong

in giving the credit of the private theatricals to Fouqué. It is true that Fouqué did arrive at the castle in the autumn of 1736, and that Racine was performed soon after. But the grave, stiff, and, as Mr. Carlyle rather severely says, 'pedantic' soldier with pietistic leanings who was then getting into middle life, was just about the last person to put it into anybody's head to try play-acting. I do not think it rash to say that the bright idea very likely arose in Frederick's own brain. But what is certain is not only that *Mithridate* was given as a beginning to many performances of a like sort, but that Fouqué took in it the part of Arbates, the king's confidant. The rôle ought to have suited his years and gravity very well, but whether it was or was not that he had been persuaded to take it against his will, his 'interpretation' of it seems to have been a sad failure. I fear that he was much quizzed about it, and I believe that he never went on the stage again. We gather that for years afterwards anything said by a witty person about 'Fouqué's Arbates,' was always accepted as a cheerful and striking illustration of the way in which a thing ought *not* to be done. He himself owned that he had not talents for the stage. After the lapse of more than twenty years he still comes back upon his one appearance. It is in 1760, at one of the darkest periods of the Seven Years' War, in an hour when the fortunes of Prussia have fallen low. A canonry in the Cathedral of Brandenburg having become vacant by

the death of poor Prince Maurice of Anhalt, the King bestows the benefice on his faithful general—King and general being both under arms five days' march from each other. (How long is it likely that the one will have anything left to give or the other live to enjoy the gift?) Fouqué sends back his grateful acknowledgments and, with a poor attempt at fun, in the face of an Austrian host and overwhelming odds recalling merry days at Rheinsberg, fears that he will perform the spiritual functions of his new post as ill as 'the *rôle* of Arbates.' Only a few weeks later his forlorn hope was crushed, and he was carried off to Croatia and kept there as a prisoner of war till the Peace.

Heinrich August Baron de la Motte Fouqué, the son of a French protestant refugee, was born at the Hague in 1698. Early brought to Germany he became a page at the Court of Dessau in the service of the fair Anna Lise, the apothecary's daughter and the old Dessauer's honoured wife. Having been refused leave to go to the wars, he ran away from the Court and followed the army without leave, gaining old Leopold's very heart by that act of disobedience. Soon afterwards he became an officer in Leopold's regiment. But in the long run His Highness took offence at the 'effeminate' sound of the youngster's name. He associated the French language with womankind, refined manners, and other things of that sort that ought to be kept in

their proper places, and decreed that it was to be changed into *Fouquet* (pronouncing the *t*). The Dessauer's regiment was a good military school of the rough and severe kind. In the Cüstrin days Fouqué was at Cüstrin. It is not known that he had any business there but that of keeping up Frederick's spirits. He succeeded in getting admission to him, and in sitting with him in the evening against orders. Everybody has heard of his lighting 'Captain Fouqué's candles' at seven o'clock, when the Crown Prince's candles were blown out. His high principles and rigid notions of duty, just a little modified by his great attachment to Frederick, made him good company for the captive Prince—very much better company than that which some other friends could offer. Frederick, knowing this very well, not only liking him but looking up to him, was no sooner fairly settled at Rheinsberg than he got leave for Fouqué to come and pay him a long visit. It may have been hoped that the visit could be spun out into a standing one, but that was not to be. Fouqué had to go back to his duty, and not long after, by the greatest ill-luck, he had a misunderstanding with his regimental chief, the old Dessauer—by that time really old and more rugged than ever—a misunderstanding which went so far as actually to end in Fouqué's leaving the Prussian service and Germany altogether, in January, 1739, and emigrating to Denmark, where he remained till Frederick ascended the throne and called him back.

In after years he bore his share in all his Sovereign's wars and fightings, distinguishing himself and being much distinguished, even beloved, by Frederick, who was very generous to him in money matters, and kept up in the tone of his address to him a sort of echo of the old respectful form. Fouqué was one of those who, like Zieten, would not stand ungodly or improper discourse, and the King did his best to keep down such talk when any of them were by. In 1760, only two months after the bestowal of the canonry above-mentioned, when the Seven Years' War had reached its worst, there did take place one very hard rub between the King and General Fouqué. The King, several days' march off, being vexed beyond bearing at Fouqué's having lost hold of an important position, wrote an angry letter in language that was not respectful at all to his old friend (there was even something about the *diable* in the letter), ordering him to retake the position. Fouqué, hurt to the core and vowing, in case of disaster, never to draw Prussian sword again,* obeyed, was overwhelmed, and carried into captivity. When he was set free at the Peace three years afterwards, he retired to Brandenburg to live on the revenues of his canonry. He had married many years before a Demoiselle Maison, and was the father of several children. † The eleven last years

* The story is gloriously but briefly told by Mr. Carlyle, vol. vi., pp. 6—9, 13—15. The letters are in the 20th tome of the *Œuvres de Frédéric le Grand.*

† When he emigrated to

of his life were spent in deep quiet and content. He was surrounded by his family and much petted by the King, who had long forgotten all his displeasure. Brandenburg being an easy drive from Potsdam, Fouqué, till he became too frail, was always expected to spend a few days in summer at Sans Souci, and in the spring the King, on one of his inspections, regularly halted for an hour or two at Brandenburg and dined with him.

Their correspondence in these closing years is very full of tid-bits of tenderness and attention on his Majesty's part. He is constantly sending presents; sometimes such valuable ones as silver plate and whole consignments of porcelain from the new manufactory in Berlin, more often fruit or vegetables from the gardens of Sans Souci, or Rhine wine, or Italian truffles,—on one occcasion a 'bit' of 'pâté de Périgord *véritable*,' at another time some Turkish coffee from the 'mamamouchi,'* and repeatedly a bottle of *baume de Mecque* from the same quarter. One Christmas it is a present 'de vieillard à vieillard,' an easy chair that can be raised or lowered at pleasure. Fouqué, on his side, getting more and more infirm, and feeling his infirmities keenly, often hints that

Denmark in 1739, he left his family behind him, and Frederick, who was then ill able to afford it, took on himself the charge of the children's education.

* The Turkish ambassador, whose arrival and stay were an unfailing source of wonder for many months.

his days are numbered and humbly implores his Majesty not to take so much trouble for a useless old dog. Once, returning thanks for some truffles, he sadly ends, 'I am growing deaf, and I have great difficulty in making myself audible. Your servant is quite gently approaching the great journey.' To which Frederick replies :—

'Your letter has made me sad, my dear friend. You tell me of your departure, and, if it depended on me, I would like to keep you here as long as possible. Men are to be found everywhere, but seldom such good men and faithful friends as you. Take as good care of yourself as possible, so that I may not lose you so soon, and think of the affliction I should have if I were separated from you for ever. A little deafness does not signify. There are horns made on purpose to aid the hearing; Madame de Rocoulle had one, and I shall get one made for you, so that I hope, with the help of the fine weather, you will recover strength, and that I shall yet have the pleasure of seeing you at Sans Souci.'

Fouqué answers greatly *attendri*, almost as if his nervous system were shaken by so many favours, whereupon Frederick writes again :—

'I see that we must put some strength into you. Two days ago they wanted to taste some Hungarian wine of my grandfather's. It was thought good. I kept a bottle and send it to you. It is the last. May it do you good. If you would like any other old wines, I have all sorts, and it will be a real pleasure to me to supply you; you have only to say the word.'

Dr. Cothenius is also despatched to Brandenburg, but the old general, who does not conceal his dislike to medicine, receives the royal medical adviser with such excessive hospitality, and the whole family so vie with each other in entertaining him, that he goes away again without even offering a prescription, and makes report accordingly at Sans Souci. Whereupon the King, somewhat piqued, remarks :—

'I sent you a doctor. Finding, however, that you made but a very superficial use of him, I send you some melons, which perhaps will be more to your taste. . . . He says that you have let the right time for bleeding go by, but that you would still be much relieved by having a little blood drawn.' 'Sire,' says Fouqué, 'I am bled regularly twice a year, on the 15th of April and the 15th of October. For the rest I appeal to the public taste in preferring cherries and melons to cassia, senna, and rhubarb.'*

In the Rheinsberg time, Fouqué's special function and his claim to a distinct remembrance are the founding and his own Grand Mastership of the Order of Bayard. Of this Order, which, as a feature in the youthful life of Frederick the Great, has become so famous, it is curious how very little is known. Büttner, in his meagre notices of it in his book on Fouqué,† is really the sole authority. The

* *Œuvres, &c.*, xx. pp. 147, 148, 152, 153.

† *Denkwürdigkeiten aus dem Leben des Königl. Preuss. Generals der Infanterie Freiherrn de la Motte Fouqué.* Berlin, 1788.

younger Fouqué, in his Life of his Grandfather,* and other later writers (such as a contributor to the *Militair Wochenblatt* for January 24th, 1874), have done little more than repeat what Büttner had already said.

Schneider, in his book on the Order of the Black Eagle,† notices it as an odd coincidence that four heirs apparent in the house of Hohenzollern have founded orders of knighthood during the lifetimes of their fathers. 'In 1660,' he says, 'Margrave Christian Ernest ‡ founded the Order *de la Concorde;* in 1704 Margrave George William § the Order *de la Sincérité;* in 1667 the Prince Electoral Frederick ‖ the Order *de la Générosité;* and in 1735 Crown Prince Frederick the Order of Bayard.'

The Order of Bayard was strictly a military one and, as such, by no means intended merely as a joke or plaything. It was a union for the advancement of military science. 'Over and above the ordinary duties of chivalry, the object of it was to perfect military art, to investigate impor-

* *Lebensbeschreibung des Königl. Preuss. Generals der Infanterie Heinrich August Baron de la Motte Fouqué.* Von seinem Enkel Friedrich, &c., &c. This stout volume is a very disappointing one. It is far from being either as readable or as instructive as the same author's memoirs of Undine and Peter Schlemihl.

† *Das Buch vom Schwarzen Adler-Orden.* Berlin, 1870, p. 4.

‡ Of Brandenburg Bayreuth.

§ Also of Bayreuth.

‖ Afterwards King Frederick I. In 1667 he was not the Heir Apparent or *Kurprinz*, nor did he institute the *Générosité* except jointly with his elder brother Karl (who died in 1674). The two boys were twelve and ten years old in 1667.

tant points of tactics, to study the campaigns and operations of ancient and modern heroes, and to amass a store of knowledge and military problems.' *

I do not know who first started the idea of it; most likely Frederick himself, possibly at some suggestion of Fouqué's. Neither do I know when the first chapter was held.† Fouqué was chosen Grand Master, and as such he had the honour of knighting (de donner l'accolade à) Frederick and the other candidates. Each Knight wore on his breast, next the skin, a decoration consisting of a sword (in silver doubtless) couched on a wreath of laurel, with the motto, *Sans peur et sans reproche.*‡

The Knights were twelve in number. I have never seen a complete list of them. They were all soldiers in active service. It is mentioned that Knobelsdorff, who had been very brave in his fighting years, was disqualified as a candidate, owing to his having left the army. Each one on his admission took or received a name, of which names a few have been preserved. Frederick was

* Büttner, ii., p. 237.

† All the authorities, I think without exception, whilst taking it for granted that the Order was instituted at Rheinsberg, give 1735 as the year of its creation. The two things are not compatible. Frederick and his friends were not at Rheinsberg in 1735.

‡ I have never seen one of these decorations. Frederick's is shown; but when I went to look at it, it had just been packed along with some other things into a box for removal to other quarters.

'Le Constant.' Fouqué was 'Le Chaste,' and the Duke of Bevern was 'Le Chevalier du Carquois d'or.' Prince William of Prussia, who was only fourteen in 1736 and must surely have been knighted later, was 'Le Sobre.'

The Order was by no means allowed to die out after Frederick's accession. It endured for many years, and, though it never became a thing of importance, there are traces of it and of such vigour as it had not only till the beginning of the Seven Years' War, but even later. From time to time it received new members. Prince Henry of Prussia was admitted in 1745, within a month or two of his twentieth birthday, and took the name of 'Le Gaillard.' His missive to Fouqué, on the occasion, in archaic chevaleresque French ('A très-haut et très-puissant, très-preux et très-hardi Chevalier le Chaste, grand-maître du très-noble et très-illustre Ordre des Chevaliers Bayards sans peur et sans reproche'), acknowledging receipt of the 'pancartes,' is printed by the younger Fouqué.* Still later, Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick and General von Saldern are named as new members.

When Frederick in 1758 sent General Fouqué his Reflections 'sur la manière de faire la guerre,' &c., and again in 1760, his 'Considérations sur les qualités militaires de Charles XII.,' we are free

* Fouqué was one of the generals whom in after years Prince Henry hated with a hatred stronger than death

to suppose that this was still in his character of a Knight of Bayard. In one of his letters of that period, it is stated that he addresses him as 'Imperator.' Ten years later, at Christmas, 1768, sending him 'une petite marque de souvenir,' he harps once more on the old string. 'I treat you,' he says, 'as one of the family, tant en qualité d'honnête et preux chevalier sans peur et sans reproche qu en qualité de mon ancien ami.'

In 1762 Duke William of Bevern, Knight of the Golden Quiver, writes a long letter to Grand Master Fouqué, a prisoner of war in Croatia at the time, sending him in name of the other Knights *dutiful* greetings and good wishes for the New Year. Fouqué's reply to this (January, 1763), is *the latest* document known to me bearing directly on the Order of Bayard. (He sends the Duke formal authority to take possession, 'through the Secretary,' of some papers 'on military problems,' of a member deceased.) What became of the Order after the Peace of Hubertsburg, I cannot tell. Whether Fouqué continued to be the Grand Master, when he was no longer in active service, I do not know. But we have no reason to suppose *that any other* Grand Master was ever, either then *or later*, elected in his room.*

* In 1788 Büttner publicly requested all persons who might have documents bearing on the Order in their possession, to communicate them to him. I do not know whether any such ever reached him. Even yet, after the lapse of ninety more years, they would not be uninteresting.

Once, a good many years later than this, and in an out of the way place, we stumble unexpectedly on a *souvenir* of the Order of Bayard. It is in the Preface to the French translation of Sturm's 'Meditations,' which translation, like other books of the same class, was the work of her Majesty Queen Elizabeth Christina. She published all the rest of her books quite anonymously; but on this occasion, having for some reason written a preface, she thought it necessary to sign the preface, and she signed it 'Constance.' It would appear that in the old times, in the hey-day of the Order and of her merry life at Rheinsberg, she, proud of her Knight 'le Constant,' had in the joy of her heart taken to herself this feminine equivalent for his name. And now, after forty forsaken years, when everybody else had forgotten all about it, she brought it forth again, by stealth as it were, and when nobody was by to observe what she was doing. She had been, and she was, Constant.

CHAPTER X.

KNOBELSDORFF.

Birth and early life—Soldier, Painter, and Architect—Paints portraits of the King and the Crown Prince—Completes the building of Rheinsberg—*Friderico Tranquillitatem Colenti*—The Planets and the Temple of Bacchus—The Berlin Opera-house—The Palace of Charlottenburg—Sans Souci—Knobelsdorff's Dairy—His Death—His *Éloge*—His successors—The House of the Ninety-nine Sheep's-heads.

GEORGE WENCESLAUS VON KNOBELSDORFF was born in 1699, on his father's estate of Kuckädel, near Crossen. The father dying early, George, the firstborn of four brothers, took to soldiering when he was yet but a boy. In 1714 he became a corporal in a battalion quartered at Cüstrin. In the following year he saw plenty of fighting. He took his part in the campaign in Pomerania, including the siege of Stralsund, and landed with his battalion in Rügen. All this, particularly the roughing it in winter (Stralsund capitulated on the 24th of December, 1715), hurt the boy's health. He began to spit blood, but he stuck by his duty and his regiment. In 1723 he became an ensign, and in 1728 a sub-lieutenant. The regiment was quartered in different towns of the Mark and Pomerania till 1729, when it was ordered to Berlin.

Immediately after that, Knobelsdorff took his leave of the army. He was allowed to retire with the rank of captain in June, 1729. After his retirement he gave himself wholly to Art, having all along, when he could command the leisure, worked hard at drawing and painting. In Berlin he began to study painting in good earnest under Pesne, and architecture under Kemmeter and Wangenheim.

It is thought that he began about this time to teach the Crown Prince drawing. King Frederick William himself, as is known, painted *in tormentis*, and could have no objections to his son's being put in possession of so useful an accomplishment. Be this as it may, the Prince's arrest put a stop to all such pursuits in August, 1730. It was formerly said that Knobelsdorff was one of the officers on duty at Cüstrin during the time of the Prince's confinement, and more especially one of those who did what lay in their power to sweeten the captive's solitude. The tradition has been given up. Knobelsdorff had left the service by that time, and was living in Berlin in deep retirement, hard at work. But it is just possible that, when the worst stage of the arrest had been got over, he may have gone to Cüstrin to see the Prince. In 1732 he was at Dresden, going on, no doubt, with his architectural studies. His proper calling had, by degrees, become plain to him. Under Pesne's instructions he had made such progress that he painted land-

scapes, we are assured, 'in the manner of Claude'; but none the less it turned out that 'painting had but been leading him by the hand towards architecture.'

In 1732, the Prince coming forth from his eclipse and being sent to do military duty at New Ruppin, permission was granted that he should take several of his own friends and favourites into his service; of whom Knobelsdorff was one. He was engaged to carry the Prince on in his drawing, and to be a general referee and authority in all matters connected with the Fine Arts. His position in the household was technically that of *gentilhomme*, a grade inferior to that of *chambellan*. When the Prince in 1734 went to join his father on the Rhine, Knobelsdorff, as we know, went with him and carried the letter to the Margravine of Bayreuth, which brought about the meeting between her brother and her.*

At New Ruppin itself there was some out-of door work to do. In Frederick's kitchen-garden, the Amalthea, Knobelsdorff, in 1735, built a Temple;—Doric columns supporting a cupola, on the top of which was a statue of Apollo. Here we are to suppose that the party sometimes supped on moonlight nights, or that Frederick often sat alone with his books and his musings. The tradition told to this day in the place, and repeated to

* Mr. Carlyle. *Hist. of Fred.*, ii., 507.

myself by the old gardener, is that he used 'to think over his plans' there. The temple is still standing. It and the garden belong now to a wealthy tradesman of New Ruppin, who has put the whole place in good order, and still gives supper parties in the temple; as I learn from Fontane, who was once invited. The statue of Apollo is gone.*

In 1736 Knobelsdorff went to Italy, partly in order to engage singers for an Italian Opera at Ruppin (in which he failed), and partly to perfect his own knowledge of the branches of art dear to him. The antique bent of his mind, in tragic disharmony with the 'taste' of that half of his century, was confirmed by the journey. The remains of Greek art are the only thing he speaks of with real reverence; even towards Raphael he is flippant. The modern Italians, and all their doings, he hates. He has nothing but contempt for ecclesiastics, noblesse, and people; and his distress at the meanness, dishonesty, and hypocrisy that he is beset with, not only hinders his enjoyment, but plainly often distorts his vision. He hardly cares to look at a picture at all, if it happens to belong to some beggarly Roman *principe*, all ignorance and self-conceit, whose servants are left to

* It was, very likely, taken away to be turned to account as a decoration elsewhere. In a description of the grounds of Sans Souci, made soon after they were laid out, I have met with 'a statue of Hercules from New Ruppin.'

pick their wages out of travellers' gratuities. 'Any one,' he writes, 'who should say a word against Raphael or Michelangelo, would run a greater risk of the Inquisition than if he taught Jansenism. . . . A Christ ascending into Heaven in a cold Siberian atmosphere, whilst the spectators in the foreground are taken up with the capers of a boy possessed of a devil, is, because Raphael painted it, thought worth more than all the world besides . . . . The instrumental music here has never taken my fancy ; I wish I could let them hear a Ruppin concert.'

In the spring of 1737 he returned home, recalled by the Prince, who had need of him. The young court was fairly settled by that time at Rheinsberg, in the half-built palace. During the three following years, till they all left Rheinsberg for ever, Knobelsdorff was, in one respect at least, the most important person in the house. Even apart from his functions as architect, he was a great gain to the party. He was not, indeed, by any means what is called a courtier ; his manners were not bland or bending. On the contrary, we are led to understand that he was blunt and rough, and rather silent than otherwise; but apt, when he did speak, to speak his mind and to stick to what he had said. But he was brimful of knowledge, and aspiration, and design ; a treasure to persons wanting information without trouble—a still greater treasure to a young Prince even fuller of aspirations than himself. He

had brought with him some portfolios full of Italian sketches, which were a fund of great delight to Frederick, who perhaps even then yet indulged in day-dreams of the grand tour; of being himself permitted to visit the lands of the *beaux arts* and the *bon gout*, things on which his heart was so firmly set, but which were denied him in the soil of Brandenburg.

Knobelsdorff's first work on coming home was a portrait of Frederick, which he painted for Voltaire; the same picture which Keyserlingk afterwards carried to Cirey.

A month was spent on the portfolios and the portrait, in telling what he had seen, and laying plans for the work he was about to do. It was a delightful month—all the more so for being a stolen pleasure, Knobelsdorff's return not having been notified to the King. When at last his Majesty was duly informed, the Captain was summoned to Potsdam to give an account of himself; and there, at the Prince's request, he had the honour to paint his Majesty also.*

* This picture was exhibited in Berlin in 1863, at the Exhibition in Memory of Frederick the Great. It was brought from Rheinsberg for the occasion. Where it is now, is another question. Those who had to do with the arranging of the Exhibition, say that every object was afterwards restored to the place from which it had been taken. In Rheinsberg, on the contrary, people have made to myself the rather sweeping statement that 'nothing was ever sent back.' There are still several pictures of Frederick William I. in the House, one of which, to judge by the King's age, may very possibly be Knobelsdorff's.

After this, Kemmeter, the King's architect and Knobelsdorff's old teacher, having been got rid of (as far as we can make out, with the consent of all parties), the further building of Rheinsberg was put into Knobelsdorff's hands. The *corps de logis* and the left wing being completed, there was only the right wing to be added; under which circumstances the new architect had no choice but, with just so much additional grace and dignity as belonged to his higher aims and acquirements, to tread in his predecessor's footprints. A year later, facing the new wing, a house for the servants was begun, which afterwards was turned by Prince Henry into the *Cavalierhaus*—by which name it is known to this day.

In the *Schloss* Knobelsdorff's own taste is to be observed mainly in the colonnade of thirty-two Ionic columns, which connects the two wings on the side next the lake, and in the inner façade of the *corps de logis*, which, forming as it does, when seen from the lake, a background to the colonnade, he brought into harmony with it. He constructed three (of the four) bridges that spanned the moat and the river. The one that faced the chief entrance had on its parapets eight statues bearing lamps—the five planets Mars, Venus, Mercury, Jupiter, and Saturn, with Apollo, Diana, and Aurora, 'lighting the way to the Rising Sun.' Above the portal he placed a brazen shield, with

the inscription, FRIDERICO TRANQUILLITATEM COLENTI, MDCCXXXIX.*

By 1739 the house was what might be called finished, though Pesne and his myrmidons were still hard at work indoors; so that the Prince full of projects, and the architect ready with designs, could turn their thoughts to the grounds and gardens. Those were the times in which a great house and its grounds were laid out in strict keeping with each other, the grand aim being that they should form a whole; the house part and parcel—of course, chief part—of the grounds, and these a sort of expansion and amplification of the house. In the present instance, as there had been different hands at work, so there were different styles, which styles were multiplied in after years.† A very grand gateway at the further end of the great garden-walk, was begun in 1740, and finished the year after, when Frederick had left Rheinsberg. It was forty feet wide, and it had Corinthian pillars thirty feet high, carrying groups of children and enormous vases. It remains to this day in tolerable preservation. To finish the *coup d'œil* in that direction, an obelisk was set on a rising ground outside. Hothouses were begun. An orangery

* Hennert, &c., S. 32. The statues, designed and executed by Glume *in wood*, had become ruinous, and four of them had been renewed, when Hennert wrote.

† I have read somewhere that the gardens at Rheinsberg were laid out from plans of Le Nôtre's. They must have been posthumous plans. (Le Nôtre died in 1700.)

was begun but never finished;—Prince Henry afterwards turned it to another use. The Temple of Bacchus described by Bielfeld, that was to consist of an inverted punch-bowl borne by twelve satyrs, was never carried out—was, I believe, never even begun.

In April, 1740, six weeks before Frederick's accession, the town of Rheinsberg was burned to the ground. The palace was not harmed, but only a very few other houses and the church escaped. The whole place, as we see it now, was rebuilt as quickly as possible after Knobelsdorff's plan, but not under his eye.

The new King's head being very full of plans for tempting all the Muses to come and settle in Berlin —to make it their head-quarters, in fact, in all time to come—the first thing to be done was to get suitable lodgings made ready for them. By the beginning of July, the town was full of rumours about the buildings that his Majesty was going to raise—a new Palace, an Opera-house, a Play-house, an Academy of Art, an Academy of Science, and what not? Everybody whose opinion or taste could be trusted, had orders to engage some votary of art or science. Voltaire was asked to secure some French actors. Suhm was written to, to bring Euler from St. Petersburg. The ambassador in Paris was told to look out for dancing-girls. Graun was sent to Italy to find musicians. Knobelsdorff went to France for some months to look at the French

theatres with his own eyes, and to hire sculptors. On his coming home in November, he was appointed *Surintendant* of all the Royal palaces and gardens, Manager of the theatres, and Director of music.

The first architectural works that he took in hand were the Opera-house and the Palace of Charlottenburg; which last had been begun by old King Frederick I., and left a fragment throughout the whole reign of Frederick William. The new King had not made up his mind as to where he would live; he hankered after Rheinsberg, looked about him doubtfully at Potsdam, and thought that Charlottenburg—lying so conveniently near to Berlin—might perhaps be the place. But then it would have to be finished. Just for a while at first it did not matter so very much; he spent those early summers more in camps than in palaces. But he did not intend that sort of life to last long, and he wanted to have a house ready for himself when he did come home. Why it should take so much more time to build a new wing to an old house, than to conquer a province, he could not at all make out. In every letter he urged, and prayed, and ordered the *Surintendant* to get on, and at the same time to inform him minutely of everything that was being done. Knobelsdorff, neither very ready with his pen nor indulgent towards dilettanteism in any *métier*, was not the sort of man to gratify his Majesty. He came good speed with his

work and, when driven to do so, reported progress in a matter-of-fact way. The King, getting nothing out of him, applied to Jordan. These impatient inquiries from Bohemian camps, before and after battles, are very funny.

'Chrudim, 8th May, 1742. Fredericus Jordano greeting. I have received a letter from Knobelsdorff, which I am pretty well pleased with; only it is much too matter of fact; there are no particulars. I should have liked the description of each astragale at Charlottenburg to fill four quarto pages; that would have interested me extremely.' —'Camp at Zleby, May 20th. . . . You will have got the letter in which I sent you word of our victory.* . . . Tell Knobelsdorff to get my dear Charlottenburg put in order for me and to finish my Opera House.'—'Camp at Brzezy [no date] . . . I am impatiently expecting a letter from you; but write to me no end of buildings, furniture, and dancers. That cheers me up and is a relief to me from my occupations, which, being all of them important, are becoming difficult and serious.'—[Later] 'Do get that big Knobelsdorff to send me word how Charlottenburg, my Opera House, and my gardens are (*comment se portent*, &c.). I am a child in this respect. These are my dolls that I amuse myself with.'—'Camp at Kuttenberg, 7th June . . . Write a great deal about Charlottenburg, the Park, the Opera House, and give long descriptions so as to entertain me for a good while with something pleasant and amusing.' †

Whatever his Majesty might think, Charlottenburg was completed speedily and well. To this

* At Chotusitz, 17th May, 1742.

† *Œuvres, &c.*, xvii., 198, 208, 214, 216, 221.

day that part of the palace is noticeable for its noble proportions and simplicity of detail, and it is, in a sense, touching to remark how gladly and faithfully those who were employed on it went about their work. Pesne, whilst his grand fresco of the Rising Sun at Rheinsberg was hardly dry, painted the Risen Sun on the great ceiling at Charlottenburg. Prometheus, who took the celestial fire, hovers in mid-heaven, *i.e.*, Frederick, the Prussian eagle, flying sunwards; with the motto, '*nec soli cedit.*' Pallas Athene in complete armour points out his course to him. Underneath, in the four corners of the ceiling, Morn and Even, Noon and Night, wait to take their orders from him.

In the long run the palace of Charlottenburg became not Frederick's own private retreat, but the official summer residence of the Court. It was there that on all solemn and ceremonious occasions which fell in the summer months—a wedding, the visit of a foreign royal personage, or the like—the King and Queen and whole Court resided for a few days to do the honours.*

Hardly any day-dream was ever so early and well realized as the old Rheinsberg day-dream of the grand Opera House in Berlin, which was to rival or outvie all other opera houses, both by the beauty of its own proportions and the splendour of

* Now-a-days strangers generally go to Charlottenburg, merely to see the Mausoleum and Rauch's statue of Queen Louisa. Yet the interior of the palace is worth looking at.

its representations. On the 5th of September, 1741, the King being at Reichenbach with the army, Prince Henry, then fifteen years old, laid the foundation-stone. And, by dint of unheard-of pushing, the building was actually so far completed that the first performance—that of Graun's 'Cesare e Cleopatra'—took place in it on the 7th of December, 1742. The outside was quite unfinished, and even in the interior things were so far back that the ceiling was hidden by canvas, the gildings had not been begun, and there were plain deal benches instead of chairs in the boxes. But the wonder and delight were none the less great. Such a theatre, with such a performance, in such a town as Berlin, had never been seen or thought of.

In about a year after that, it was completed. It stood for just a century. It was burned down in 1843. The outside has been restored pretty nearly, unluckily not quite, in accordance with the original plan.

It was, indeed, a remarkable building, unique at the time of its erection for simplicity and classic beauty. To rate it at anything like its real worth, we must bear the tastes and mannerisms of that day well in mind. It showed, as nothing else could, what Knobelsdorff, to borrow the common phrase, 'could do.' Had he gone on as he began, he might surely have done very great things. But that was not to be.

It was not long till the King, every inch a king,

wanted to be the King of his own brick and mortar. In old days he had been Knobelsdorff's admiring pupil; henceforward he was himself going to be the Master-mason. The lessons had not gone so deep as we might have expected; it turned out that his Majesty's 'style' was not a classical one. In general he cared about the Fine Arts only in so far as they were cheerful; he thought the words 'grave' and 'severe,' as applied to them, almost a contradiction in terms. He wanted to play with his 'dolls.' He loved delicate gay colours in his rooms, and lively music on the stage—was quite annoyed, for instance, if an *aria* was in a minor key. In architecture he liked what we call the Rococo, as it admitted of his amusing himself with making the stone and lime play pranks. But this clashed with the ideas of the *Surintendant*, who, himself very severe and extremely in earnest, was not the man to like seeing his own *métier*, the whole aim and end of his life, turned into somebody else's toy. Unfortunately it was not given to him to bring forward the best of what was in himself pleasantly, or half playfully, and with the careless nonchalance of good breeding, so as to secure it a readier hearing. He was positive, intolerant, and disastrously serious, like many men of one great idea and settled ill-health. In the long run, indeed, as better might not be, he did give in to the King, but always with a bad grace and inch by inch.

The King's ideas, we are told, were always 'poetical,' but, he being ignorant of the laws of architecture, they often were not such as could be embodied in stone and lime. Thus the *Surintendant*, who knew the capabilities and limits of his art very well, even when he was willing to humour his Majesty and sacrifice questions of style, still had long battles to fight with him about details. The consequences soon were endless jarrings. Wishes pretty plainly put in words, were met by contradictions and perhaps refusals; these again were met by downright commands. The time came soon enough when the King no longer bore with the slightest contradiction from anybody. The end of the second Silesian war (from 1745–6 onwards) has been roughly, but no doubt rightly, called the period at which, feeling by how wide a world he had shot ahead of those who had fashioned and trained him, he became autocratical, not in statesmanship and strategics only, but in all the walks of life.* Becoming more and more the one and only spring of all that was done to the furthest ends of Prussia, he could less and less brook any modifications in the carrying out of his commands. Old teachers who did not suddenly forget that they had once known something of their calling, and

* In still later years he became didactic as well as imperious, and lost no chance of drilling men in their own walk of life. In his last years he took as much pains to teach Reichardt the principles of musical composition, as to train Rüchel in strategics.

readily turn into docile tools, could not but be much in the way. For a time Knobelsdorff was, perhaps, more in the way than anybody. He, indeed, with a heavy sigh had tried to give up his dreams of Greek art, and to let go his hopes of reviving something like it in Berlin. But, whilst yielding to the King, he still honestly and loyally sought to make the best of his Majesty's plans, and often, most likely usually, had a squabble with him about the right mode of fulfilling them; his better knowledge showing him methods hidden from an amateur. The King, disliking to fight with a foe who had the better of him, and loth to grieve an old friend too sorely by a continual repetition of imperial fiats, shirked both by often forgetting him altogether, and by making shift more and more to get on without him. Somewhere in Potsdam his Majesty found a Dutchman, or the son of a Dutchman, of the name of Boumann, 'half mason, half gardener,' it is said, who was willing to do as he was bid; and it was not long till he had made him, in reality if not in name, his head architect.

Sans Souci, which to this day is always associated with Knobelsdorff's name, was the immediate cause of the worst quarrel that ever took place between the King and him. Frederick, having at last made up his mind to build a summer-house on the favourite hill where he was to be buried,* him-

* After all he was not buried there.

self drew the first rough sketch of it. Knobelsdorff made a drawing after the sketch, and, whatever he may have thought of the King's ideas, he laid the plan quite in accordance with them; so far, all went smoothly. Perhaps he had hoped to modify the plan when it came to be put in execution; if so, he was mistaken. When the building was going to be begun, early in 1745, he did propose this and that change; the King would not hear of them. Knobelsdorff, as we are informed, at that time still 'unaccustomed to contradiction on the part of his scholar,' insisted. The King, also getting less and less used to contradiction, insisted in his turn; and at last, on one occasion, something like a loud altercation took place. The next morning the *Surintendant* sent word that he was ill, that he had been seized with a spitting of blood and was unfit for any kind of exertion. The King sent a doctor to him, who saw the blood. Manger, who tells the story, adds that 'it is not always possible to distinguish exactly between the blood of a human being and that of another animal.' But Knobelsdorff was allowed to leave Potsdam and go back to Berlin. Sans Souci was built according to the plans he had made, as far as these were to the King's mind, by Boumann, who for a long while after this was a very godsend to his Majesty, carrying out every order to the letter, without criticism, change, or murmur.

During some years no work of importance was

put into the *Surintendant's* hands. Public buildings were erected in Berlin without his being consulted. The personal relations between the King and him underwent little change. On Frederick's side there was no falling off in the old regard; and Knobelsdorff, whatever chagrin and vexation he may have felt, had less opportunity of showing these. To be sure, his irritation was the greater of the two, his stake being the larger. Soon after the affair of Sans Souci, some marks of Frederick's good-will are recorded—marks of good-will that may have been meant, very likely, to wipe out irritation. Keyserlingk dying in 1745 and leaving one little girl, the King appointed Knobelsdorff to be the child's guardian. On the same occasion, feeling greatly bereaved and longing to see a friend's face, he sent for him, and Knobelsdorff went to Silesia to be near him and comfort him. Soon afterwards he made him a handsome present of two houses in Berlin (in the Kronenstrasse and Leipzigerstrasse, back to back). Knobelsdorff, though he had little or nothing more to do with the building at Sans Souci, continued to lay out the grounds there. The King wanted to be put in mind of Rheinsberg, or perhaps rather to realize some of the schemes begun yonder and so suddenly broken off. In his own sketch of the south front of Sans Souci, he had more or less consciously thrown into one the Orangery at Rheinsberg and the Temple of Bacchus that was to have been. Following out this intention, Knobelsdorff

built a gateway like the Rheinsberg one, with an obelisk beyond to close and crown the view from the door of the Temple of Friendship.

When everything was finished, Sans Souci was 'inaugurated' on the 1st of May, 1747. It was a high festival and brilliant gathering, long looked forward to, and designed to lay the beginning, in good earnest this time, to the working out of the ideal Platonic Republic (with ampler freedom of reasoning under a crowned and autocratic head), which had been aimed at and broken off at Rheinsberg. The fine evening of early summer on the broad terraces, may have recalled to the minds of several just such evenings in other years in the quiet 'valley,' where republican pleasures, especially the pleasures of daring thought and free speech had had to be stolen. All the old friends who were still left were there, of course, along with a great many new ones. Of the former set, one or two of the very best and dearest—Jordan, alas! Keyserlingk, alas! alas!—were sorely missed. So were some others who had never been seen at Rheinsberg, but whose society had been much counted on for the years that were to come after.

Knobelsdorff, we may be sure, was there, and of course he was often invited to Sans Souci; but it appears that a certain discord or estrangement between his Majesty and him did begin to be observable after a time. His harsh manners and rude speeches, which grew worse rather than better,

jarred with the tone *à la française* of that most elegant and refined and sprightly circle. He did not care merely to please; and when he sought to impart knowledge, the roughness of his finger, which would nearly push out the eye that he meant to open, must have been very inconvenient and offensive. The chagrin that he felt at the disappointment of his hopes, the non-fulfilment of old expectations, preyed on his spirits and health. He lived first in the one and then in the other of his houses in Berlin, and in summer in his dairy on the Spree, where the Palace of Bellevue now stands.* He did not seek society, though he was kind to those who sought him; but on the whole he was best pleased to be left to himself and his work. The laying out of the *Thiergarten* was one of his occupations and a great amusement to him. Frederick, in the *Éloge*, lays very special stress on this—'the variety and the grouping of different sorts of foliage;' at that time a new art in Germany. Some of the roads and walks in the *Thiergarten* remain to this day as he left them. So do a few (not many now) of the houses of private persons which he built.

The last great work of which he not only made the design but superintended the execution, was the palace of the Duke of Anhalt at Dessau. But, as time went on, he began again to draw many of

* I do not know whether there was any milk in the dairy. Frederick had abolished the privilege of feeding cows in the *Thiergarten*. (Raumer. *Der Thiergarten bei Berlin*, S. 44.)

the plans for public buildings in Prussia; plans which were afterwards carried out by Boumann or others, sometimes after they had undergone very serious alterations. Knobelsdorff always treated Boumann as a 'mason,' and sneered at his handiwork, though he was very well aware that his Majesty had usually given a very active consent to each detail. The Town Palace of Potsdam was altered and added to, first by Knobelsdorff himself, and then by Boumann, after Knobelsdorff's plans. To give a finish to the façade, the Dutchman put 'human heads,' classical or mythological very likely, on the outside of a number of the windows—a head as a sort of keystone in the middle of each cornice. The next time Knobelsdorff came to Potsdam, he said the palace looked now like the Seraglio of the Grand Turk, with the heads of the vanquished stuck up as trophies. A while after Boumann again set heads on the windows of some private houses in Potsdam, heads of fauns grinning and putting out their tongues. This time Knobelsdorff made some remark so very cutting that the King, feeling the point of it, though very angry, actually caused the heads on the façade of the palace to be taken down. The places left by them, filled up with mortar, are to be seen to this day. Some of the fauns were also taken down. Apparently, Knobelsdorff had no dislike to sculptures, even humorous ones, on buildings, so long as they were able to give some account of themselves. When the military hospital at Pots-

dam was built, he himself, at the King's wish, put four heads of oxen on the front of it, to spite the doctors. Some strictly pædagogic attributes on the school-house, to make the pathway to knowledge plain—an Orbilius with a switch in his hand and a schoolboy upside down across his knees—are also said to owe their existence to 'his Majesty's cheerful humour.' (They were by Glume.) *

Where the road from Berlin enters Potsdam, the King, with Boumann's help, raised a very fine gateway. As soon as it was finished, his Majesty in-

* The new schoolhouse and the two parsonages were all under one roof. They were a copy on a small scale of the palace of Cardinal Quirini in Rome. I suppose it is the same schoolhouse in connection with which Manger (*Baugeschichte von Potsdam*, ii., 455) tells us that when the building was finished and the clergymen took possession of it, they were greatly discontented at finding a long dark loft to the front of the house, where there ought to have been some comfortable attics; the fact being that the King, for reasons of external symmetry, had given orders that there were to be no windows, not even skylights, in the roofs of the houses on that side of the street. The *Kirchenvorsteher* (churchwardens, clergy, and the like) having considered their top story, sent an official message to the architect, directing him to construct rooms in the front attics like those in the back. The architect was obliged to refuse, alleging as his reason the King's prohibition. The church court, having met a second time and sat upon his refusal, sent him this rejoinder:—It is part of the business of an architect to convey the light even into those rooms in the partitions of which he has not been permitted to make openings; and this is what may reasonably be demanded of him. (Es gehöre zur Kunst eines Baumeisters, auch diejenigen Gemächer, in deren Umfassungsmauern keine Oeffnungen dürften gemacht werden, zu erhellen; und dies könne man von ihm mit Recht fordern.)

vited Knobelsdorff to dinner one day, and sent a carriage all the way to Berlin to fetch him. The company having assembled, and his Majesty, who was in good spirits and very gracious, having made his appearance, one of the first questions he put to Knobelsdorff was, 'How do you like the gate?'—adding somewhat complacently, 'Your blockhead of a Boumann built it.' 'That is, no doubt, the reason why I did not observe it,' returned Knobelsdorff. Whereupon the King in a huff said, 'You had better go home again,' and turned his back to him. Knobelsdorff at once left the room, hired a carriage, and drove off. Dinner being announced, he was nowhere to be found, but there came a message from the guard-room to say that the *Surintendant* had passed the gates on his way to Berlin. A man on horseback was instantly sent after him to bring him back. But the *Surintendant* replied, 'His Majesty himself commanded me to go to Berlin. I am at no loss as to whether I am to obey his own orders or those of a common soldier.' And he drove on.

It is said to have been the last time that Frederick and he met. Knobelsdorff, who had long been in ill-health, sickened and died in the autumn of 1753. He had never been married, but he left behind him two little girls, whose mother was 'the daughter of the sexton at Charlottenburg.' These children, by his dying request in a letter to the King, were allowed to inherit his fortune and take his name,

but not his title. Of their mother, who was very beautiful, he left two portraits.*

The King himself wrote the *Éloge de Knobelsdorff* for the Royal Society. He did full justice to the upright character and great talents of the deceased. He did not say that he had himself often failed to appreciate him while yet it would have been time, but looking back tenderly, no doubt, on old years, and sorrowfully at later estrangements, he made the best of the dead man's peculiarities.

'M. de Knobelsdorff,' he says, 'had such candour and probity in his disposition as to make him generally esteemed. He loved the truth and was persuaded that it offended nobody. He thought complaisance irksome and shunned whatever seemed to restrain his liberty. It was necessary to know him intimately to feel all his merit. He encouraged talent, he loved artists, and he chose rather to be sought out than to put himself in people's way. Above all, it must be said in his praise that he never confounded emulation and envy; sentiments so different, indeed, that it is not possible to be sufficiently urgent in recommending artists and men of science to distinguish between them, for their own honour, for their repose, and for the well-being of society.'†

* The main authority for Knobelsdorff is the life of him by a lateral descendant: — *Georg Wenceslaus von Knobelsdorff, der Baumeister und Freund Friedrichs des Grossen. Von Wilhelm von Knobelsdorff.* Berlin, 1861. There is also a memoir of him by Villaume in the fourth volume (for 1869) of the *Mittheilungen des Vereins für die Geschichte Potsdams.*

† It is not uninteresting to remember that his Majesty wrote these remarks in the very year of Voltaire's noisy departure, hardly six months after that stirring event, and whilst it was still

The greater part of the *Éloge* is taken up, of course, with a highly appreciative sketch of the artist's career.

After Knobelsdorff's death, his cottage on the Spree passed from one hand to another, but it still bore his name. In the third quarter of the eighteenth century, 'Knobelsdorff's Dairy' was the usual goal and turning-point of the good folks of Berlin, when they took a stroll on a summer evening in the *Thiergarten*. Then they had some refreshment in 'The Tents' (*Die Zelten*—tents of very modern masonry now), and strolled home again. But in 1785 Prince Ferdinand bought the dairy and its grounds, and built there the Palace of Bellevue. Knobelsdorff's house is still standing. The gardener lives in it, and kindly lets the prying stranger walk inside and look at Pesne's frescoes, ruined and repainted.

On Rauch's monument to Frederick the Great, Knobelsdorff appears in a bas-relief with Sans Souci in the background. He is presenting to Frederick

extremely fresh in his recollection, how signally that eminent person had failed to 'distinguish between emulation and envy.'

According to the *Œuvres*, Frederick wrote eight *Éloges* for the Royal Society, the subjects of which were Jordan, Duhan, General Goltz, La Mettrie, Stille, Knobelsdorff, Prince Henry (the Younger, the King's nephew) and Voltaire. He began an *Éloge de Keyserlingk*, but being driven about from camp to camp just at the time, he left it unfinished, and Maupertuis wrote one instead. But it is also very doubtful, I believe, whether he really had any hand in the *Éloge de Duhan*.

the bronze statue of the Praying Boy, which he purchased for the King from Prince Eugene's collection (it is said when the collection was dispersed). It used to stand at Sans Souci, but it now is, and during many years has been, one of the chief treasures of ancient art in the Berlin Gallery.*

Knobelsdorff's claims on the Art of his native country are, and are recognised to be, greater than after so many miscarried projects, they might at first sight appear;—greater than he himself, one fears, looking back on his career as a defeat and failure, can have dared to hope. The little that he was allowed to do, and the much that he aimed at, were the foundation on which the revival of art in Berlin afterwards took its stand;—a Revival which came to great things in the earlier part of our own century. In point of time he is named as the first of the Reformers of the Art of North Germany. And it is worth remark how many of the most distinguished of these—Knobelsdorff, Winckelmann, Schadow, Rauch, and Schinkel, for instance, (one of whom was the Reformer, or rather Restorer, of Art, not in North Germany merely, but throughout Europe)—were natives of the Mark of Brandenburg.

* Ranke (who is always right) says that it was Prince Lichtenstein who, having made an exchange with Prince Eugene and given something else for the Adorant, sold it to Frederick by Knobelsdorff's agency for five thousand dollars. Prince Eugene had bought it from the Marquis de Belleisle for 18,000 francs. (*Zwölf Bücher Preussischer Geschichte*, iii., 451.)

For some time after Knobelsdorff's death, the principles that he had tried to embody seemed to have parted in sunder again; the seed that he had planted was slow of growth at first. It was not kindly fostered by higher authority. Still, even then, the results of the effort of his life were not quite lost to sight. Things never went back to the rude barbarism of the reign of Frederick William I. No doubt some of the younger architects, and perhaps many intelligent persons amongst the public generally, had by his means come under the sway of a new sense of beauty. His works thus, by main force as it were, held the taste of the community on a higher than the natural level. Only in Frederick's architectural designs we see no trace of them. When the *Surintendant* was dead, the King at last felt himself free to take his own way, without the risk either of contradiction or of hurting anybody's feelings. And, by the hands of his trusty Boumann, for thirty years or more his Majesty's 'ideas' were carried out faithfully and literally. Of spirit, or 'poesy,' or the like, we who have come after can see little trace. There are eccentricities, strange and many; whims, freaks, quips of autocratic wit and humour, passing fancies of despotic fun, intrusted to the keeping of the most lasting of materials,—vexatious rather than otherwise to posterity.

Some of Frederick's jokes in freestone have been

often repeated. The following, for the historical accuracy of which I am far from vouching, is perhaps less known. If good for nothing else, it will at least help to illustrate the growth of popular mythology in what is now the German metropolis.

In the Alexander Platz in Berlin, there is a house known as the House of the Ninety-Nine Sheep's-heads. It is said that Frederick the Great once upon a time, having heard much good of some one who lived in the Landsbergerstrasse, of his royal clemency bestowed the gift of a fine new house on that person. Whereupon a neighbour, who lived round the corner in the Alexander Platz, was so filled with envy that he could not sleep for sheer longing after a like mark of the royal favour. Not that he had need of it, he was rich; the honour of the thing was what his heart was set on. So he began to give large sums of money to the poor, and to take a leading part in useful and benevolent enterprizes. And to be sure the King, hearing of this noble character, sent for the man and told him to ask a favour. So he begged to have a house. And before many months had come and gone the house was built, and the happy proprietor had taken possession of it. Yet even then he was *not* happy. The statues on the roof of his neighbour's house made him so envious that he could not sleep for thinking about the statues. Now, as it happened, old Fritz riding that way one day stopped his horse and asked the man how he liked

his house. He said he liked it hugely;—but there was one thing. If his Majesty would only deign to give him some figures, like his neighbour. 'Yes, surely!' said the King; 'you shall have figures,' and rode on. And the King ordered ninety-nine sheep's-heads in freestone to be set upon the house. (About fifteen are said to be to the fore.) The next time that the King rode that way, the man in fear and trembling made complaints of his neighbours, who were so ill-natured as to think that there was an allusion to the proprietor in these sculptures. 'But you have got what you wanted!' said the King. 'Oh, certainly, your Majesty!' said the man.—'But the sheep's-heads, you know!' 'Well! to be sure there are only ninety-nine,' returned the King. 'But if you want a round number, you have just to put your head out at the window. Good day!' And the King rode on.

CHAPTER XI.

ANTOINE PESNE.

Is invited to Berlin by Frederick I.—Is Director of the Academy—Is turned off by Frederick William—Goes to England—Returns to Berlin—Excels in portraits—Maids of Honour—Little Fred and his Sister and the Moor—His frescoes at Rheinsberg and Charlottenburg—The Rising Sun and the Risen Sun.

ANTOINE PESNE was born at Paris in 1683. He came of artistic people. Both father and grandfather (which latter was Jean Pesne the engraver) were given to art, and so was more eminently his mother's brother, Charles de la Fosse. Having grown to manhood under their precepts and example, Antony went to Italy, and it was a portrait painted by him in Venice, in 1707, of the Prussian Baron Knyphausen, which led to his being called to Berlin by Frederick I., as First Painter to the Court and Director of the Academy. Antony arrived in Berlin in 1710, having in the meanwhile married at Rome Anne, a daughter of Gayot de Buisson's. As director he had a handsome salary of twelve hundred dollars a year, and upwards of fifty pupils. But evil days were at hand, and they tarried not to dawn on the Academy as soon as Frederick I. died in 1713. Frederick William

turned the votaries of art adrift, and suppressed their salaries. Whereupon Pesne, who had soon become much sought after, for a long time lived chiefly by painting portraits. In 1716 he painted the picture of the King's two eldest children, Wilhelmina and Frederick, with the Moor, which has been repeatedly engraved, and of which a print is prefixed to the first volume of Mr. Carlyle's History. It is perhaps the best known of his pictures. Some years later he went to England and painted some of the royal family, but did not stay so long as he had intended, his 'French manner not being liked in England' (says Fuessli). He returned to Berlin and went on as before, but it was not till the Prince Royal grew up, or rather till Frederick ascended the throne, that better days really dawned on Pesne and his fellows.*

Of his frescoes at Rheinsberg and Charlottenburg, the few words said elsewhere must suffice. Later frescoes at Sans Souci in no wise concern us. And famous as some of these once were, it was not in them or in his historical pictures, but on the contrary it was in his portraits that his strength lay. He painted everybody of note then in Prussia or near it, and surpassed himself when his sitter was

* His wife's relations the Du Buissons, father, three brothers, and two sisters, all or nearly all of them flower painters, followed Pesne to Berlin and settled there. We find one of them, most likely the father, along with Pesne at Rheinsberg, doing decorations, no doubt.

a good-looking Maid of Honour. These portraits are interesting, not for their subjects only, but for the treatment. They, and his mythological pictures also, abound in the galleries of Berlin, Dresden, and Brunswick, and are often to be found in private houses. But though he filled a large place in the artistic history of his time, and is named as an eminent artist by eminent critics (Waagen for one), he has had little but a bare mention from historians.* A careful account of his portraits would surely be a most thankful undertaking for any able-minded person out of employment.

There is a French Ode of Frederick's addressed to Pesne, and dated 'ce 14 Novembre, 1737.'† It was written about the time when the artist had been commissioned to decorate the ceilings at Rheinsberg. It is a long Ode, quite in Frederick's usual style, but one of the pleasantest in that style; —I think, perhaps, actually the very pleasantest and simplest and freshest and most readable of them all. I should be slow to say that it ever goes off the enchanted ground of common-place, but it moves about on those familiar plains with so good a grace as to be quite charming. It dwells at great length on three of Pesne's most recent portraits,—the Queen, the poet's mother, Made-

* The best notice of Pesne known to me is, after Nagler's, that given by Dussieux in his 'Artistes Français à l'étranger.'

† '*Poëme adressé au Sieur Antoine Pesne.*' *Œuvres, &c.*, tome xiv., pp. 30 &c.

moiselle de Walmoden, the Maid of Honour, and Prince Leopold of Dessau. These are described and extolled, and the artist, who has been straying into ecclesiastical art, is warned to give that up and stick to good models and the mythologies. Beginning with a grand burst,

> 'Quel spectacle étonnant vient de frapper mes yeux !
> Oui, Pesne, ton pinceau te place au rang des dieux;' &c. &c.

it ends,

> 'Abandonne tes saints entourés de rayons,
> Sur des sujets brillants exerce tes crayons ;
> Peins-nous d'Amaryllis les danses ingénues,
> Les nymphes des forêts, les Graces demi-nues,
> Et souviens-toi toujours que c'est au seul amour
> Que ton art si charmant doit son être et le jour.'

Pesne painted Frederick as King in 1742. This is the admirable likeness, an engraving of which is prefixed to the third volume of Mr. Carlyle's History, and also to the first volume of the quarto edition of the *Œuvres de Frédéric.*

Pesne and Knobelsdorff were the only painters to whom Frederick ever sat ; with the sole exception of Zisenis, the Brunswick limner, to whom, at the earnest entreaty of the Duchess of Brunswick, he gave a sitting of one hour's duration at Salzdahlum.*

In the *édition de luxe* (the quarto edition) of

* This was 'between 1770 and 1775.' (Fiorillo ; *Geschichte der zeichnenden Künste,* i. 392.)

the *Œuvres de Frédéric*, besides the portrait of the King, those of Frederick I., Frederick William I., Sophia Dorothea, and Knobelsdorff are by Pesne.

The portrait of Frederick at Hampton Court is thought by Waagen to be his.

CHAPTER XII.

THE COMPANIONS.

Keyserlingk speaks six Languages all at once—Is seen in his Dressing-gown and with a Gun on his Shoulder—His Devotedness to Frederick—Jordan—Formerly a Preacher, now a Sceptic—And a Book-worm—Deaths of Jordan, and Keyserlingk, and Duhan.

It does not seem to be doubtful that of all Frederick's friends of those years—and any friendships that he may have formed in later years were essentially less intimate—Keyserlingk was the nearest and dearest. And of Keyserlingk hardly anything is known. Little is recorded concerning him in the rather formal *Éloge de M. de Keyserlingk*, written for the Academy of Sciences by Maupertuis. Bielfeld and Pöllnitz have both left descriptions of him as he appeared to them; descriptions much like to each other and, on the whole, though they do lay great stress on his *bonté de cœur*, not very flattering. He himself, notwithstanding all his great acquirements, has left nothing to judge him by. It is only recorded that he made a French translation of 'The Rape of the Lock'! His correspondence with Frederick is possibly extant, but it has never seen the light of day. In 1837 Preuss somewhat mysteriously held out hopes

of its being given to the world.* But when he, a few years later, took in hand his own great Edition of the Works of Frederick, it does not seem to have been placed at his disposal. And since then, forty years having elapsed, I am not aware that it has again been heard of.

Like so many others of the Rheinsberg set, Keyserlingk was not by birth a Prussian subject. He was born on the family estate of Octen in Courland on July 5th, 1698, being thus nearly fourteen years older than Frederick. His mother was of Italian lineage, a Della Chiese. He was an extraordinary child and boy. Being sent to the university of Königsberg at the age of seventeen, he seems to have passed his examination on admission with unusual brilliancy, delivering four harangues on the occasion in as many languages. He was equally skilled in bodily exercises, excelled in dancing, &c. After spending two years in Paris, he found his way to Berlin, and got a lieutenancy, afterwards a company, in the regiment of Margrave Albert. Eventually he was placed near the person of the Crown Prince. What became of him during the Prince's imprisonment, I know not; but it was the first favour asked by Frederick on his release, and

* Preuss. *Friedrich der Grosse als Schriftsteller*, Berlin, 1837, p. 286. . . 'and the King's correspondence with his favourite friend the Count Keyserlingk, called Caesarion, will probably, in accordance with expressions used by an estimable descendant of the same, not much longer be withheld.'

granted by King Frederick William, that Keyserlingk should be given back to him. And from that day forward there was, I believe, no lull in their intimacy till death separated them.

We are safe in supposing that Frederick knew his friend better than other people did and, prizing him for qualities not shown to the world at large, was less likely to be annoyed than chance acquaintances might be by eccentricities of manner, to which after all he was doubtless less exposed than they. The thing about Keyserlingk that struck strangers so much and fatigued friends so often was his very extraordinary vivacity;—I daresay it was usually damped in the presence of Royalty. Pöllnitz, combining traits some of which seem to contradict each other, says he—

'was more unruly than a school-boy, and his tongue was amazingly voluble. He talked German, French, Italian, Latin, Polish, and Dutch, and often all these languages in the same conversation. . . . His memory made up for want of cleverness. . . . By his own account he knew everything, yet he was superficial in everything. . . . Nothing could exceed his kindness of heart; he carried it so far as to be everybody's friend, which was the reason why people did not set great value on his friendship. Honour and candour were the mainsprings of all his actions . . . When he died he was universally regretted.'*

Bielfeld has left two descriptions of Keyserlingk;

* Pöllnitz. *Mémoires, &c.*, tome ii., p. 187.

descriptions professing, of course, to be contemporaneous, but really written from memory and giving, not the writer's first and fresh impressions, but rather the mature imaginations of his advanced years. It is more than likely that he had, or thought he had, special reasons for not loving Keyserlingk's memory; a general reason for envy and malice in such a case as this, is not far to seek. It was the grudge borne by a small man, who had not at all succeeded in climbing to the higher or highest walks of favouritism, against another man, who, without any apparent struggle on his own part, had been beloved till death, and whose memory was held in honour. The contrast had naturally stirred up some spiteful feelings, which, after the lapse of twenty years, it was a relief to give vent to. And Keyserlingk's eccentricities being a fit subject for caricature, the opportunity was an admirable one for throwing some reflected ridicule on the King, who had been so blind to the defects of the one, and so much more monstrously blind to the merits of the other; which other, now no longer in demand, was actually living obscurely in foreign parts.

Immediately after Bielfeld's first arrival at Rheinsberg, we are to suppose that this interview took place—

'I had not yet got a sight of the Baron K.' [why the initial, so many years after the death of the person meant?] a nobleman from Courland. . . . I had heard so much

about him, and I was so greatly prejudiced in his favour, that I was most eager to make his acquaintance. He immediately came into the room, with a noise and clatter like the North Wind in the Rose Ballet. He had returned from shooting, and I was a good deal surprised at seeing him in his dressing gown and with a gun on his shoulder. He addressed me with a cheerful air; his first words led me to believe that I had long had the honour of being his intimate friend; he laid hold of me by the arm and almost carried me into his chamber. Whilst dressing, he recited to me some parts of the *Henriade,* quoted some passages from German poets, talked about horses and hunting, performed some capers and steps from the *Rigodon* as Balon does them, got upon learned matters, and discoursed to me on politics, mathematics, painting, sculpture, literature, and military affairs. I stood as one stupefied. I listened in calm silence. I admired all, even the leaps which he made with such agility from one subject to another. It did seem to me as if his extraordinary liveliness could not be natural, and did not always proceed from the source of a productive mind. . . . He is short of stature and thick-set, has small eyes, a broad nose, a not very handsome mouth, and a yellow dark complexion. His look is frank and unconstrained, he carries himself well, and has out and out the speech and manners of a man of high birth.'

In June, 1740, a few days after Frederick's accession, Bielfeld, alluding to the rejoicings, more especially of those who frequented Charlottenburg, is again supposed to write :—

'The Baron de K. is at the head of these happy subjects. His apartment is never empty. His doors are all marked with the name "Cæsarion," which the King

has bestowed upon him, and of which he seems to me to make a dangerous use. He receives about fifty letters either of congratulation or on business every day, and employs several secretaries to write the answers . . . A torrent of verses flows from his pen. . . . He receives daily trifling presents from the King, which have the same effect on his mind as the greatest favours on others. He jumps about in the gardens and all through the palace with a little amber pipe at his button-hole; he plays on the bass fiddle; he sings, laughs, and jokes . . . I think he will have a *transport au cerveau.*'*

The enthusiasm of Keyserlingk's affection for Frederick is formally acknowledged by Maupertuis in the *Éloge* which was read at a meeting of the Royal Society. He says: 'It was not a tranquil feeling which he had for the King, it was a genuine passion. He desired that the whole world should see him, know him, and love him.' And he adds further that 'he was too fond of showing attentions to people, and doing them services.'

In November, 1743, Keyserlingk married the Countess Juliane de Schlieben, *dame d'honneur de la reine.* The wedding went off at court in the most brilliant fashion. But in less than two years, on the 13th of August, 1745, Keyserlingk died. By his marriage he left one daughter. The mother being so very young, the King appointed the

* *Lettres familières, &c.* Letters of 30th October, 1739, and 20th June, 1740.

Countess Camas and Knobelsdorff the child's guardians. Ten years later, in 1755, Keyserlingk's widow died at the age of thirty-three. In 1760 the daughter, by that time herself a maid of honour to the Queen, married a Herr von Alvensleben. The marriage took place at Magdeburg, the court having sought refuge there for a season. Countess Voss was present at the ceremony, but was not struck with the bride's appearance :—

'She had on,' she says, 'a white silk dress trimmed with silver, which was neither pretty nor rich, and I did not think that she looked at all well, but just as impudent and conceited as usual. The supper was wearisome *à mourir* . . . She took leave of the court without making any very great display of feeling. . . . The whole party convoyed her home.'*

The marriage did not turn out happily, and was dissolved in 1771. The lady married again Baron Edelsheim, who, with his brother, settled in Baden; where they became—they and their descendants—a well-known family of statesmen.

Next to Keyserlingk, or perhaps quite alongside of him, I suppose that Jordan was Frederick's favourite attendant and companion. Jordan, the son of a French Protestant refugee (and born in Berlin in 1700), had been a French preacher at Prentzlow in the Uckermark, but had given up his living after his wife's death, partly on account of

* 69 *Jahre am Preussischen Hofe*, S. 80.

ill-health, but perhaps quite as much owing to a change in his belief, and had retired to live in Berlin with his two little girls. His brothers, who were merchants, furnished him with the means of travelling, and he did travel to France, England, and Holland, and when he came home published a 'Voyage Littéraire.' The Crown Prince, having either read the book or else heard favourable things said about the writer of it, and being in want of a French scholar for his correspondence, begged Manteuffel, in whom he then had great confidence, to make the ex-preacher's acquaintance and judge of his fitness for the post. Manteuffel thereupon invited Jordan to dinner, and reported favourably. The upshot was that he was invited to Rheinsberg, at first, it would seem, only as a visitor; Frederick having been obliged to promise that he would 'put a book-case into Mr. Jordan's room.' Afterwards, like Des Champs, he lodged in the town, and for a time at least he seems to have taken some part in Des Champs' Sunday services.

Once when he had gone to Berlin on leave of absence, Frederick sent a rhyming letter after him ordering his speedy return. Had there been more such letters, they would have thrown many side lights on the Household and its ways. As this extract from it shows :—

'Seigneur Jordan, on vous invite
À venir chez nous au plus vîte,
Accompagné des agréments
Que vous mêlez si joliment

Dans vos discours pleins de sagesse,
Et qui plaisent également
Aux barbons et à la jeunesse.
Notre petit prêtre à rabat
Vous marque son impatience ;
Il veut, dit-il, votre présence
Pour célébrer un sien sabbat
Avec grande magnificence.
Son marguillier, ce petit fat,
Prétend en fredons marotiques
Psalmodier de longs cantiques
Pour amuser les auditeurs ;
Ils feront bâiller les apôtres,
Qui, je crois, du goût de nous autres,
Connaissent des plaisirs meilleurs.

. . . . .

Pour Chasot, qui, dans son réduit,
En damné travaille sa flûte,
Qui fait enrager jour et nuit
Tous ses voisins, qu'il persécute,
D'un instrument tendre et charmant
Il tire des sons de trompette.
Wylich en a mal à la tête,
Et ses voisins par conséquent ;
Le fameux chantre de la Thrace
L'aurait puni de son audace.
Vous lui direz éloquemment,
D'un ton doux et d'un air bonasse :
De l'histoire de Marsyas,
Chasot, ne vous souvient-il pas ?
Nos plaisirs, Jordan, vous séduisent,
Pour le coup, mes raisons suffisent,
Vous allez redoubler vos pas.
Ah ! je vous vois chercher vos bottes
Et vous couvrir de ce manteau
Qui, dix ans passés, fut nouveau.'

. . . . .

'The meaning of this is that it is impossible to do without you at Rheinsberg. We have made trial of it for three days, and they have appeared to us lovers' years. We all expect you on Monday evening. Lay in a stock

of good spirits; bring all the erudition of your library without the dust, and count on being received as a man who is essential to us.'

After the accession,* Jordan was made a Privy Councillor, Curator of the Prussian Universities, Academies, &c., and Director of a *maison de travail* in Berlin. It was in the last capacity, I suppose, that he organised a police force, cleared the streets of beggars, and became famous as the founder of the Berlin hackney coaches.

The Letters to him are by far the most charming of Frederick's published letters. There are no others that come up to them in naturalness, *abandon*, and fun. When the two friends were separated, which they were for the most part during the First and Second Silesian Wars, they wrote to each other pretty regularly twice or three times a week at great length, both in prose and verse. With respect to the verses, Formey somewhat ill-naturedly says that, 'Le bon Jordan suoit sang et eau,' to pay the King back in that sort of change. Altogether, Formey does not rate Jordan's powers high or his acquirements either, except in the one branch of bibliography, in which he acknowledges him to have possessed 'une érudition fort variée.' We

* Formey tells us that before the accession Jordan had sometimes rendered 'essential services' by procuring through his brothers, the rich merchants, loans of money, he and they running very considerable risks by thus flying in the face of the King's severe prohibition. *Souvenirs d'un Citoyen*, i. 45, &c.

can hardly evade a persuasion that Formey's estimate was a very just one. We do not trace genius or even *esprit* in anything Jordan wrote; what we do find, particularly in his letters, is the evidence of great personal worth, honesty, amiability, and faithfulness. It appears, however, that Frederick, less able then than he afterwards became to gauge men's gifts, took him for a mine of learning. He is always rallying him about that devotion to his library which made him neglect his friends and forget to write to them.

Some passages from these letters have been often quoted, as this of May 3rd, 1741 (after his first successes) :—

'You will find me more of a philosopher than you thought. I always have been one, a little more or a little less. My age, the ardour of my passions, the desire of glory, even curiosity, well! to hide nothing from you, a secret instinct, snatched me from the pleasant repose which I enjoyed. I was led away by the satisfaction of seeing my name in the newspapers and then in history.'*

What one likes best are the utterances of friendship, as the following :—

'Olmütz, 2nd February, 1742. . . You wage war against me, pitiless Jordan, for not having enjoined on

* In reading such an extract as the above, which is so truthful so far as it goes, we have to bear well in mind that 'cloak of darkness' (Mr. Carlyle, ii., 333,) which Frederick did not readily lay aside in his epistolary communications. Some gifted French writers, by forgetting the cloak, have fallen into the mistake of thinking themselves in possession of Frederick's whole mind.

you in the most positive manner to write to me. Have you not got *esprit* enough to understand that even if I did forbid fools and importunate persons to write to me, that had nothing to do with my dear Jordan? Do you doubt of the pleasure that I have in reading you, or the comfort that it is to me in my exile to receive letters from home? And even if all these reasons did not strike you, learn and know that two words from my friend's pen are more precious to me than all the most subtle points brought forth by the prodigal brains of people without affection or genius. Conceive that my delicacy of feeling finds charms even in your big characters, and that, if your audiences and your library will permit of it, I shall be delighted with your correspondence. . . . I was a great fool, dear friend, to quit my repose for the frivolous glory of uncertain success. But there are so many follies in the world. And I count this amongst the old ones.' . . . ('Selowitz, March 7th.) . . I often think of Rheinsberg and the voluntary application which was making me familiar with the arts and sciences. But, after all, there is no state without its drawbacks. I then had my petty pleasures and my petty reverses. I navigated the fresh water; now I am drifting on the high seas. . . . I hope and flatter myself that my friends will always find me what I was.' . . . (Later.) . . . 'You are right in thinking that I am working hard. I do so to live, for there is nothing so like death as idleness.'

Jordan died three months before Keyserlingk, on the 24th of May, 1745, Frederick being under arms at the time. That was a busy and an anxious summer in the King's history; the doubt and difficulty, and the pleasure of success in the field, being sadly darkened by these losses in his home circle.

In the autumn of that year, some of Jordan's books having been forwarded to the King, to replace those he had lost at the battle of Soor (when his baggage was pillaged), Frederick, on opening the parcel, wrote to Duhan (October 24th, 1745) :—

'I confess that the tears came into my eyes when I opened the books of my poor defunct Jordan, and that it caused me real pain to think that a man whom I loved so much is no more. I dread Berlin for this reason, and it will be difficult for me to wean myself from the pleasures which were once afforded me in that city by the friendship and society of two persons whom I shall mourn for all my life.'

Duhan himself, Frederick's former tutor, and afterwards his trusty councillor, followed the two others on the 3rd of January, 1746 ; just after the King's triumphal entry at the close of the Second Silesian War. These three deaths within eight months, the deaths of three early friends, left a blank which was never quite filled up. Unless it was for Rothenburg and Winterfeldt—and even these friendships were soon broken up—the King never formed such attachments again. By the time old age came on, his heart had grown lonely. Before all was done, it had got used to its loneliness, and had come rather to like it.

The King always thought his fate a hard and singular one, to have been thus bereft of all those he loved best. In 1760 he writes to the Duchess

of Gotha, thanking her for having recommended some philosophical book to his notice :—

'It is misfortune, madam, which turns men into philosophers. My youth was the school of adversity, and even since then, though in a rank so much envied and so imposing for its pomp and splendour, I have not wanted for reverses and ill-fortune. One thing which has happened to hardly anybody but myself, is that I have lost all the friends of my heart and my best acquaintances.' These are wounds from which the heart bleeds a long time, which philosophy assuages, but which its hand is unable to heal.'*

* *Œuvres*, xviii. 181. In the 'Stoïcien' (written at Strehlen, 1761,) are the lines :—

'Où sont les compagnons de mon adolescence ?
Où sont ces chers parents, auteurs de ma naissance ?
Ce frère qui n'est plus, et vous, ô tendre sœur !
Vous, qui ne respirez que dans ce triste cœur ?' &c.

Whilst mentioning the name of Frederick's respected correspondent, the Duchess of Gotha, I cannot resist going so far out of my way as to reclaim for its rightful owner the *bon mot* about Providence and big battalions, which I have myself, oftener than once or twice, seen attributed to Napoleon. In 1760 the Duchess —the Duke of Gotha was the brother of the Princess Dowager of Wales—had a hand in some negotiations between the King of Prussia and the court of St. James's (it was on that occasion that the Baron Edelsheim, whose sudden seizure and confinement for twenty-four hours in the Bastille, where Choiseul paid him a visit, made a good deal of noise at the time, was sent to London and Paris), and whilst the negotiations were pending, she sent Frederick, to cheer him up, a letter full of kind commonplaces about his rightful cause, and her assurances that Providence must needs favour it in the long run. Frederick replied (Meissen, 8th May, 1760,) . . 'confus de n'être pas de votre opinion, madame, au sujet des opérations de la Providence, je ne saurais me désabuser du préjugé dans lequel je suis que, à la guerre, Dieu est pour les gros escadrons.' (*Œuvres*, xviii., 186.

A list here of the deaths of some of Frederick's best friends, with the date of each, may not be uninteresting.

Suhm	died	3 November, 1740.
Camas	„	14 April, 1741.
Jordan	„	24 May, 1745.
Keyserlingk	„	13 August, 1745.
Duhan	„	3 January, 1746.
Rottembourg	„	29 December, 1751.
Knobelsdorff	„	16 September, 1753.
Winterfeldt	„	8 September, 1757.
The Margravine of Bayreuth	„	14 October, 1758.

CHAPTER XIII.

EQUERRIES.

The Prince breaks Windows and Buddenbrock attends him—Buddenbrock's Father will give his Life for the Prince—Buddenbrock is married—He shows Moral Courage—Manteuffel is sorry that the Prince's attendants are so Ignorant.

THE aforesaid officers of the Prince's regiment who either lived at Rheinsberg as aides-de-camp or often came and went, did not, so far as I know, bring to the social common fund any other than the usual quota of lieutenants on leave—a welcome contribution of youth, high spirits, gallantry, elegant persons, surely, and endless dancing. Buddenbrock, I understand, was for a length of time the aide-de-camp in personal attendance on the Prince. At Ruppin he had lent a willing hand in many a naughty trick in the days, or rather nights, of practical joking. It was he, too, who, knowing the place, was the attendant on the first expedition to Mirow.* He was the son of the old Field-Marshal von Buddenbrock; the same who in 1730, when Frederick William asked the assembled generals whether the Crown Prince as a deserter did not

* Mr. Carlyle, ii., pp. 609–14.

deserve to die, tore open his waistcoat and pointed to his breast, crying out, 'If your Majesty demands blood, take mine!' After Frederick's accession the younger Buddenbrock was made a *Flügeladjutant.* I do not know whether he very greatly distinguished himself in actual fighting, but of course he took his part. He commanded a battalion of grenadiers in the second Silesian War, and was wounded at Hohenfriedberg.* Afterwards, it is said that he dropped rather out of sight during some years.† If it be true that he was neglected, it was only for a time; later he stood high in the King's confidence. He held for many years the posts of Chief of the Military Academy and of the *Cadetten Corps* (in which latter capacity he laid the foundation-stone of the present building in 1776), and he was, says Frederick, 'L'homme du pays sans contredit le plus capable de vaquer à cet emploi.'‡ And, what was more, the King appointed him tutor to his favourite nephew, the younger Prince Henry, and was grieved and put about when Buddenbrock after a time resigned that post.§ He rose, not very rapidly, from one military grade to another,

* *Militair Wochenblatt. Beiheft*, 1862, S. 17.

† Once at this period we are put in mind how tenaciously the members of the Rheinsberg circle in their after lives kept a hold on the associations of those golden years. Knobelsdorff dying in 1753, it was found that he had appointed Buddenbrock the guardian of his two little girls.

‡ *Œuvres*, &c., tome vi., p. 99.

§ *Œuvres*, &c., tome xxvi., p. 276 . . . 'Buddenbrock demande à se retirer de mon neveu, et je ne sais qui placer près de lui.' (Frederick to his brother Henry.)

till he reached the rank of lieutenant-general in 1767.

In that same year he lost his wife, Juliana von Walmoden, the same who had been a maid of honour to the Crown Princess from 1736 onwards, and whose portrait by Pesne Frederick had celebrated in the Ode. It was at Rheinsberg that their love-making had been carried on, and the aide-de-camp had won the maid for the bride of his youth. Their wedding was one of the very first gay ceremonies that took place at Court in the summer of the accession. Nevertheless, after twenty-seven years of wedlock, he married again in less than six months. And, what is singular in the history of a man at his time of life—what, indeed, ought to be very singular in the history of any man—Buddenbrock after this *was married three years running!* Juliana having died, as I said, in March, 1767, on the 12th of August of the same year the widower married the youngest daughter of Field-Marshal von Kalckstein. This lady dying in April, 1768, he married, in August of that year, Joanna Charlotte von Wackenitz. Joanna Charlotte dying in August, 1769, he married, in December of that year, the Countess Augusta Charlotte von Wartensleben. Which last attempt seems to have been successful, for the fourth wife outlived him.*

* I take this table of his matrimonial alliances from Fischbach, — *Historische, politisch-geographisch-statistisch-und militärische Beyträge die Königlich-Preussische und benachbarte Staaten betreffend.*

He himself lived till very near the end of the reign of Frederick the Great. In their old age he was a very frequent guest of the King's, and much in favour. When his Majesty at dinner told stories, as the manner of elderly gentlemen is, of the mad doings of himself and comrades in their garrison days, he was fond of having Buddenbrock at hand to refer to for corroboration. Indeed, there was hardly any one else of the old set left.*

Once there is a very honourable mention made of Buddenbrock. In 1775 one of the King's domestic servants, a man of the name of Deesen, who from a low origin had risen to a post of trust, was found guilty of stealing. The King, priding himself on physiological discernment and apt, it was said, sometimes to put too much confidence in persons *because* they could not read or write and were therefore unsophisticated, was very angry when the crime was found out, having been often tried in the same way, and ordered the man to be punished by being sent as drummer to a certain regiment. As he was being led away, Deesen begged the adjutant's permission to fetch his hat, and then, as soon as he was alone, shot himself with a pistol he had secreted—nobody knows how. The King, at first, only said he had not thought the fellow would have shown so much courage, but he

* No one else, I think, of the actual garrison set at Ruppin, before the settlement at Rheinsberg, except the Margrave Henry of Schwedt. Chasot was beyond reach.

was very much vexed and troubled, none the less. The next day, as it happened, Buddenbrock dining quite alone with the King, his Majesty on coming into the room at once began to talk of Deesen's death. He said, 'People will be putting the blame as usual on me, and calling me a tyrant, and so forth; but what was I to do? I was obliged to punish the man. I cannot let such things pass without taking notice of them.' Buddenbrock not making any reply, his Majesty went on: 'What is your opinion? Does it seem to you that it was my fault? Tell me frankly what you think!' But the General still remaining dumb, the King at last said, 'I *will* know what you think.' Then Buddenbrock made answer, 'Yes, sire; it was your fault.' On which the King broke off with, 'Allons dîner!' and no more was said about it. In telling the story, Buddenbrock explained himself to have meant that Frederick was to blame for having placed so much confidence in such a person, and that, if the King had put any further questions to him, he was ready to have given him that explanation. Without it the verdict certainly strikes one as somewhat unjust. But the plain-spokenness of his reply to Frederick the Great, being most unusual, was much to his credit.*

Buddenbrock stood equally high in the favour of the Queen, who also till old age clung to the asso-

* Nicolai. *Anekdoten, &c., Zweites Heft*, S. 219.

ciations of Rheinsberg, and was glad to see any one who put her in mind of her happy life there. He was a very devoted servant of her Majesty's, and though it is not likely that she talked a great deal to him about old times, yet it appears that she was well aware of his faithfulness, and knew how to value it. He had an audience of her on the day before his death, which took place suddenly, November 27th, 1781.

I shall not say anything more about the Knights of the Round Table, military or other.* We should search in vain amongst them for persons of eminent gifts; it was not Frederick's lot, much as he desired

* Of the gallant young Frenchman, Chasot, the gayest and merriest of them all, there is an interesting memoir by Kurd von Schlözer. The Rheinsberg period in it is handled lightly (and unfortunately not always quite accurately). Chasot's lively temperament was always leading him into adventures. His affairs of the heart and his affairs of honour kept not only himself but some of those about him in hot water. His bravery in the first and second Silesian wars is beyond praise. But later, his proneness to take offence led to an estrangement between the King and him, which ended in his leaving the Prussian service. He retired to Lubeck, and became the Commandant of that free town and a General in the Danish army. But later in life, in 1779, when they were both old men, and had not seen each other for twenty-five years, he came to pay the King a visit at Potsdam. Five years afterwards he repeated the visit, and obtained leave for both his sons to enter the Prussian service. He outlived Frederick, and died at a great age in 1797. Schlözer quotes the words, 'Chasot, c'est le matador de ma jeunesse!' as a saying traditionally attributed to Frederick the Great, and frequently repeated in Lubeck in the latter part of the eighteenth century (according to the testimony of persons lately deceased).

it, to surround himself with such. The only brilliant member of the Household was the head of it.

'It is a pity,' wrote Count Manteuffel to Count Brühl, 'that this Prince is surrounded only with young officers, the majority of whom are very giddy and ignorant. It is certain he might have become one of the finest geniuses of our time; and it would not be difficult for him to correct a number of trifling faults both of heart and mind, which are still noticeable in him.'

Manteuffel thought himself better fitted than most persons, both by precept and example, to correct the Prince's faults. He had brought to bear on the young man all the stores of a well-furnished mind, and the maxims and tenets of his mature wisdom, and he did not doubt that the illustrious disciple was progressing steadily if not rapidly. 'It is right that you should know,' he wrote another day, 'that the most of our letters do not run now on poetry and trifles of that sort, but on morals, history, Christianity, and other things useful to a young Prince.' But, to Manteuffel's great surprise, the correspondence was broken off, and the precepts which he had been making so alluring were left at his own disposal.

Manteuffel was a man of first-rate abilities and high cultivation. He filled a chief place in society. The considerable part that he had played in political life, gave weight to a character which was adorned with all the graces of superior literary attainments,

and the charms of an enlightened piety. Many who had enjoyed his dignified hospitality (scholars of orthodox leanings, such as Formey, for instance), seem to have looked back on him all their lives as the ideal of a *grand seigneur* of religious views, whom simply to have known was a blessing. Yet in this fine character there were shadows;—posterity is apt to call them dark ones.

By birth a Prussian subject, and possessed of considerable estates in Prussia, he had been forced to fly in early life—in the time of old King Frederick I.—for writing a squib on the famous Countess Wartenberg. He then went to Dresden and, his way home being firmly barred, took service under the Saxon Government. In the diplomatic service he rose rapidly, and was employed as envoy at various courts. He even returned to Berlin, and resided there in the sacred character of Saxon Envoy from 1711 till 1716. Afterwards he went back to Dresden, and rose to be a Minister of State; but, owing to a squabble with one of his colleagues, he took his leave with a large pension in 1730, and soon afterwards came to live in Berlin altogether. With his fine fortune, he made a great figure as a friend of statesmen, and a patron of learning, and a protector of religion and philosophy. He seems to have founded two societies,—*Les Alé-thophiles*, whose object was the Search after Truth, and another more select, consisting of the highest personages in the Government and about the court,

who dined at his house once a week, wearing certain insignia round their necks, and discoursing on high matters. Alongside of this, he carried on an active business in spying, intrigue, and bribery. His object being to find out the secrets of the Berlin Government and forward them to Dresden, his own *rapports* were not sufficient; he had persons in his pay, such as Pöllnitz (Weinreich, one of the heads of Departments in the Cabinet, was also in communication with him), whose business it was to betray to him any important information that they might happen to come into possession of. His own intimacy with the Crown Prince, which had taken the fortunate shape of a permanent dialogue by letter between Mentor and Telemachus on 'morals, history, and Christianity'—'his Royal Highness listened to him the more readily,' he says, 'as he knew him to be quite disinterested,'—was a most important spoke in his wheel. It is with no small indignation that we read his remarks on the aspiring and ingenuous youth whom, for his own ends, or the ends of those who paid him, he was instructing and flattering.

After all, it might be thought but right and proper that a pensioned member of the Saxon Cabinet should before all things have sought to serve that Government, and, forgetting his Prussian birth, should have wormed himself into the confidence of those about him to betray it, and bribed those beneath him with the sums of money sent to

him for the purpose. But what, even in those days, would hardly have been thought quite consistent with the enlightened piety of a *grand seigneur* ever so 'disinterested,' was that Manteuffel was all the while in receipt of a pension of 6000 florins from Vienna, *to betray the secrets of the Saxon Court to the Austrian Government!*

Before long, Frederick obtained light on the character of Manteuffel, and the intimate correspondence was broken off. But he seems to have remained on terms of civility with him, not only till the Accession, but after it. It was after the death of the Emperor Charles VI., and when the designs for invading Silesia were being matured, that, knowing Manteuffel to be in communication with some of his own servants and in correspondence with the foes of Prussia outside, he ordered him to retire to his estates. The letter to Podewils, instructing him to convey the order, Manteuffel being 'a highly suspected person,' was written from Rheinsberg in November, 1740, and is to be found in the *Politische Correspondenz* (i. 87). The spy remonstrated, and wanted to stay; but the order was repeated, with the mitigation, however, that he might come back in the spring, if he liked. There was no help for it, but to go; but instead of retiring to his estates, he went to Baruth, the nearest town in Saxony, where he could still easily correspond with his agents in Berlin. Afterwards, he fixed himself in Leipzig and spent his old age

there, greatly looked up to as a retired statesman of scholarlike attainments, profound sagacity, enlightened piety, and active benevolence. He died in Leipzig in 1749.*

* A great part of the correspondence with Manteuffel is published in the *Œuvres de Frédéric.* Some more of it is to be found in Weber's *Aus vier Jahrhunderten* (Neue Folge) along with Manteuffel's letters to Count Brühl.

In Droysen's *Geschichte der Preussischen Politik* (iv. 4, 7), there is an account of Manteuffel's literary activity, which was considerable. He wrote mainly on political questions,—pamphlets on the Polish Election, and such like. Not long before his death, Manteuffel was elected a Foreign Associate of the Royal Society of London.

CHAPTER XIV.

LADIES IN WAITING.

The Household take Coffee after Dinner—And walk in the Gardens—Frau von Morrien—The *Table de Confidence*—*Le trop et le trop peu*—Herr von Morrien—*La bonne maman* and her Wine-glasses.

FREDERICK was right, as usual, when he said that the presence of 'the Sex' imparted a fresh charm to rural retirement. But we have no records of the special exercise of the charm, or of the fashion of social life then introduced. We do hear, indeed, that there was a coffee-party every day after dinner in the rooms of each of the ladies alternately (even the visitors not being exempted from taking each her turn as the *dame du jour*), at which the whole Court drank coffee and joked and laid plans for the afternoon, with the exception of the Prince and Princess, who had the beverage in their own apartment; and that this was not 'l'heure la plus mal passée dans la journée.'* But that is about all. The other hours of the day, with the jokes and refreshments peculiar to them, are a blank to us.

Of course the ladies were not there for nothing. We do not need to be told that they and the

* Bielfeld. *Lettres*, &c., i. 78.

gentlemen sometimes conversed with each other, or that particularly the younger ones on both sides were not often at a loss for something to say. The young gardens were just the place for a lively talk —many years afterwards, in Prince Henry's time, when the bushes had grown, they were shadier and quieter—and the forest was close at hand when a subdued tone sought scope for itself. Though we can neither see nor hear what went on, events prove that things ran their natural course. We have just learned that Buddenbrock, the aide-de-camp, and Fräulein von Walmoden, the maid of honour, must have made the ordinary use of their abundant leisure and settled matters their own way, for they became man and wife in the very year of the Accession. In the twenty-seven years of their married life, they looked back gratefully and often, one hopes, on the scenes of their official duties.

Allusions are found to other intimacies which neither began nor ended so well as this, but gave rise to complications.

Of the ladies who made up the 'set,' Frau von Morrien, I believe, was the liveliest. She figures—and figured then, with her own consent, no doubt —as 'Le Tourbillon.' Born in 1705 (as a Demoiselle de Marwitz), she was no longer in the flower of her youth, but her spirits were in their prime. One is sorry that of a person so greatly *fêtée*, or at least so celebrated, hardly anything but her variety of names should have endured. In the memoirs of

the Margravine of Bayreuth there is an ill-natured sketch of her, taken at Rheinsberg in October, 1740, which we may fairly hope is not in the least like. In later times she still reappears, always increasingly high in favour, and latterly as one of the confidential persons of the Court; but she leaves no record of her sayings or doings.*

Long years after, when the Seven Years' War had come and gone, the King, craving to pluck even then, if possible, anywhere or anyhow, such blossoms, no matter how obscure, as might be left on life's wayside, amongst other things started a social gathering of a very special kind in the house of his sister, Princess Amelia. It was nothing more than a quiet little dinner-party of six persons, which took place only once a year. The guests of the King and Princess were four elderly ladies, who may be said to have formed the nucleus of the innermost circle of the Berlin Court—the very topmost tea-spoonful, so to speak, of the *crême de la crême*—and they were the Countess Camas, Frau von Kannenberg, the Countess Kamecke, and Frau von Morrien. This dinner, which was called the 'Table de Confidence,' was given on the 31st of December, the day on which the Reign of Woman

* She was not merely a lively woman, we gather that she was clever and well-informed also. Jordan writes to the King in 1742:—'Le Tourbillon a été malade, et a gardé la chambre pendant quinze jours. J'ai eu l'honneur de la voir quelquefois. Je vais faire chez le Tourbillon une partie de raison, comme on va ailleurs faire une partie d'hombre.'

is known to begin. Each lady found under her napkin a sceptre and crown of sugar. With our heads full of all that had come and gone, we are apt to fancy that the party in its very nature was too commemorative, and the members of it rather too old and weather-beaten to be very merry; they themselves, thinking more of the actual present than of past or future, may very likely have been able to enjoy themselves well enough. But the 'Table de Confidence' did not take place very often. It was given up on the death of Countess Camas in 1766.*

There are some verses of Frederick's to Frau von Morrien, written in March, 1765, and called 'Epître sur le trop et le trop peu;' she, apparently in connection with some discussion on the amusements proper for persons advanced in life, having requested his Majesty graciously to define those terms for her. There is pathos in the tone of the 'Epître,' beginning,

'O vous, qu'en mon printemps je connus
Sous le nom
De la folâtre Tourbillon!
Est-ce vous qui voulez, dans une cour polie,
Que les disciples d'Uranie
Le compas à la main, du trop et du trop peu
Vous marquent le juste milieu?
Rappelez-vous ces temps où, sans philosophie,
Un tissu de plaisirs enchaînait votre vie,
Où, sans souci du lendemain,

* Preuss. *Friedrich der Grosse*, i. 396.

Vous confiant aux soins de la naissante Aurore,
Vous saviez qu'à chaque matin
Pour vous elle ferait éclore
Avec les riches dons de Flore,
La foule des plaisirs naissants sous votre main.
Ah ! trop aimable créature,
Que vous étiez, Morrien, gaie et sage autrefois,
Vous, qui teniez de la Nature
L'inépuisable fonds d'une joie si pure
Qui sans jamais blesser les lois
Dont la pudeur fixa le choix,
Vous lassait savourer le plaisir sans mesure.'

After some moralizing on the fleeting character of man's faculty of enjoyment, whilst the springs of enjoyment remain unchanged for evermore, and some advice to the correspondent to take things just as she finds them and trust to her own admirable instincts in the matter of selection, the 'Epître' concludes :

'Retournez donc aux jeux, aux ris, à l'allégresse,
Aux hochets de votre printemps ;
Qu'ils remplissent tous vos moments,
C'est le conseil de la sagesse.
Et sur le trop et le trop peu
Du temple d'Épidaure interrogez les dieux ;
Vous apprendrez par leur prêtresse
Que tout paraît trop peu dans la verte jeunesse,
Et tout est trop quand on est vieux.' *

For a lady of brilliant parts, Madame de Morrien was ill matched. I do not mean to speak ill of her husband's moral character; he may, for aught I know, have had a very fine temper and disposition,

* *Œuvres de Frédéric*, xiii., 8, 9.

but the powers of his understanding were absurdly contracted. He was *Grand Maréchal* to Queen Sophie Dorothée, and in that position he often had occasion to show that the turn of his mind was even less speculative and elastic than that of high court functionaries traditionally is held to be. It is of him that Sir James Harris tells the story, that when Sir Charles Hanbury Williams had written a letter of introduction for the Earl of Essex, finishing it off with, 'You may depend upon it that he is not the same Earl of Essex who had his head cut off by Queen Elizabeth,' Morrien, puzzled and disconcerted, thought it the safest thing to stick by the terms of the introduction. So at the audience he presented the Earl in these words:—'Madame! Le Comte d'Essex. Mais j'assure Votre Majesté que ce n'est pas lui qui a été décapité par la reine Elisabeth.'*

He died in 1760. In 1767 Frau von Morrien became *grande gouvernante* to the Princess of Prussia, which post, finding her health failing her—realizing too surely that 'tout est trop quand on est vieux'—she resigned in 1774. She died in February, 1775.

The two elderly lady-friends of Frederick's youth, his old governess, Madame de Rocoulle, and Madame de Camas, the wife of the Colonel, did not visit at

* *Diary and Correspondence of Sir James Harris, First Earl of Malmesbury*, i. 9.

Rheinsberg. Madame de Rocoulle was stricken in years; but when the Prince was in Berlin she had 'little Wednesdays' for him—quiet tea-parties, at which he met a very few persons of the best sort. In return, he wrote her pretty letters, calling her his 'mama,' and sent her small souvenirs. It would appear, for instance, that at one of the Wednesdays there had been a terrible smash of wine glasses, the fine frilled cuff of M. Achard, the French preacher, having swept down a whole trayful. Whereupon Frederick, having got back to Rheinsberg, was delighted to supply a new set from his famous glass manufactory.

Madame de Rocoulle died in 1741, little more than a year after Frederick's accession.

To Colonel Camas he also sends wine glasses, which, however, are not a present;—the Colonel has flattered his Royal Highness by giving him a commission to order some. Camas is constantly purveying delicacies for the Rheinsberg household, so many pounds of coffee and the like, the price of which is paid by return of post. It was Madame de Camas, I take it, who really executed these commissions. Husband and wife were both of them most worthy people, and in every sense trusty friends to the Crown Prince. Camas dying in less than a year after Frederick's accession, the widow, having been raised first to the rank of 'Countess,' was in 1744 appointed *Grande Maîtresse* of the Queen's Court in the stead of Frau von Katsch.

In this post Countess Camas continued till her death in 1766, and was from first to last a most faithful servant to both King and Queen. Frederick called her also his 'bonne maman.'* But for her, her tact and loyalty, and the weight of her character and years, the Queen's position would often have been a much more difficult one than it actually was.

An equally trusted and confidential, though somewhat younger friend, was Frau von Kannenberg. She belonged to the family of the Fincks von Finckenstein, some of the younger members of which had been Frederick's playfellows in childhood. She often came to Rheinsberg, and in later years, as we have just seen, she was a member of the 'Table de Confidence.' In 1766 she succeeded the Countess Camas as *Grande Maîtresse* to the Queen, and continued in that post till her death in 1795, in her ninetieth year.

* In the *Œuvres* there is an Ode to Countess Camas, in which her good sense is extolled as displayed in her not wearing a hoop. Likewise in the Queen's preface to her translation of Crugott's 'Christian in Solitude,' there is a warm panegyric of the deceased countess.

CHAPTER XV.

PAMPHLETEERING.

The Prince is instructed in Foreign Affairs—He thinks that Prussian Diplomacy lacks Energy—He writes a Pamphlet—But withdraws it—The *Antimachiavel*—The *Staatsschriften.*

THAT Frederick in the midst of his duties, cares, and pleasant pursuits, the regimental business, the military studies, the financial troubles, and the self-education, the music, poetry, philosophy, gardening, dancing, play-acting, and other elegant exercises,—that he at the same time and all along had his eyes and ears very wide open indeed to what was passing, not only in the kingdom of Prussia which was by and by to be his own, but also in the other countries of Europe, that in fact his mind even in those young years was very keenly bent on politics —*i.e.*, on what must needs become the main business of his active life—this is what in his position was only right, though oddly enough it has often been overlooked. He neither could nor did talk quite so freely on such matters as on many others, or correspond about them with anybody and everybody; several sorts of prudence hindered his doing that. But, even in his miscellaneous letters, there are signs

enough that his judgment was awake; and his Correspondence with Grumbkow, which from this time forward, after the settlement at Rheinsberg, turned altogether on politics, shows that it was not only awake but wonderfully mature. Grumbkow kept the Prince very fully informed of the affairs of the Foreign Office. He sent him the letters and reports of the Prussian ambassadors at foreign courts, or copies of them, which the Prince, when he had read them, regularly returned. It is to be taken for granted, though I do not know that there is any proof, that this was done by the King's orders. Doubtless it was a carrying out of the plan of training which had been begun at Cüstrin. The rudiments of administration and finance having been well mastered, and military practice being in a fair way, an advance was made to the principles of foreign policy and the relations of Prussia to other powers; the pupil being directly initiated into whatever negotiations were pending.*

We find the pupil's own views of these negotiations to have been strangely independent and bold. Though expressed with all imaginable self-control and caution,—he was hampered throughout by the most righteous mistrust of his correspondent, who

* These letters to Grumbkow were first published three years ago by Max Duncker in a very interesting volume of Essays on Prussian History:—*Aus der Zeit Friedrichs des Grossen und Friedrich Wilhelms III.* They form part of an essay on Frederick's pamphlet — *Considérations sur l'état présent du corps politique de l'Europe.*

nevertheless, as he well knew, enjoyed the King's full confidence—they go to the heart of the matter and are always consistent and courageous. These Letters are in certain respects the most interesting documents ever published to throw light on Frederick's early history. We learn from them that he was already far ahead of his father in zeal for securing to his country the position amongst states to which its internal resources entitled it, and that he was lynx-eyed in detecting opportunities and lion-hearted about grasping them. The hopefulness which so strongly marked his maturer life and always sprung up in fresh vigour under difficulties, and the fertility in resource for which he stands alone amongst the sons of men, are already to be found here, as a few sentences will show. Though eaten up with vexation at the weakness of the King's diplomacy, he always strives to wrap himself in the docile unconcernedness proper to a scholar who has his lesson to get by heart, and to learn the answers to some elementary questions.

'20th January, 1737. My dearest General. As for the political letters, I must confess that they have caused me real vexation. I foresee without necromancy that our plan about Juliers and Berg will fail; you have but to read the causes in their effects to be convinced of it. Being as much alive as any one can be to the King's renown, I suffer from seeing that all the measures are not taken which would have been essential for conducting this project to a happy termination. I seem even to perceive a hidden design formed against us, clouds

gathering which will bring on a tempest. Perhaps there might still be time to ward it off; perhaps by proper measures we might render the minds of our adversaries more propitious than they are. But what alarms me the most is to see a certain lethargy on our side at a time when people have recovered from the terror of our arms, at a time when they push their audacity to the length of despising us. I dare not express what I fear; perhaps it is my bilious humour which suggests these sinister thoughts. You will penetrate them without my repeating them to you; in fact I apprehend dangers all the greater because they are so little expected. . . . No one can take a greater interest than I in the well-being of Prussia. It is just and natural that I should take such an interest; and if you should think my conjectures overstrained, you will think them the more excusable, as a person who has anything much at heart is always apt to exaggerate. . . .

'28th January. . . . You see that my conjectures were not so very erroneous; the journey of the English ambassador to Saxony has opened your eyes! That court and those who contributed to its elevation will league themselves, they will seek a quarrel with us, and will force us to take arms in spite of ourselves, or to submit to the most ignominious terms that they can impose. I look on with indifference from the depths of my retreat at what takes place in the world. Whatever happens, neither my reputation nor my glory will suffer; consequently, I can better judge of events than those who are too much interested in their own achievements, confide too much in their own strength, and believe themselves beyond the reach of misfortune. I love the King, I have his glory at heart, and I have a genuine attachment to my country; these are the only motives which induce me to take an interest in the welfare of the state. . . . I take very little interest in any reviews but my

own, which I hope to get through, well or ill. The age in which we live is more famous (unfortunately for us) for negotiations than deeds of arms. We are in a good position from a military point of view, but our negotiations have no vigour; it would seem as though some pernicious fit of vertigo had lulled our foreign affairs asleep. Perhaps I am saying too much; my intentions are most pure, and if I sin it is from too much attachment to the King. This fault may be forgiven. . . .

'14th February. My dear General. I return you all the letters which you sent me touching the negotiation about Juliers and Berg, as I am too timid about having such papers in my hands. What I should do in this case, and what I believe the King will do, would be first of all to get on a good understanding with the Emperor, to make the Dutch believe that I had need of them as negotiators, to bind myself to them in nothing, and in the meanwhile to march all the forty squadrons of dragoons with the hussars in the direction of Cleves, to leave two regiments of cavalry and the town garrisons in Prussia, and to bring together all the infantry and the rest of the heavy cavalry in the Mark, in order that, as soon as any one gave a sign of his intention to oppose my designs, I might be in a condition to pounce down upon him; and those forty squadrons of dragoons would have orders, whenever the event took place,* to march into Juliers and Berg and take possession of *both* duchies. Afterwards, if they want to lead us into a negotiation, all they will be able to do will be to make us give up Juliers, and we shall keep Berg; whereas, if we only overrun Berg, they will make us give up the half of it. Perhaps you will be able to make use of my reflections. . . .

'4th October, 1737. . . You said to the King all

* The death of the Elector Palatine.

that a clever and honest man and great politician could say to his master on the matter in hand. I still flatter myself that our affairs will turn out better than we should have dared to expect. Some actions lose their force with the lapse of time and alter the position of everything, and what seemed incredible becomes natural and possible by these changes. It is becoming in me to talk politics,—a hermit like me, who make my chief happiness consist in not being charged with the burden of affairs. It is a very great enjoyment to be able to reason on the actions of others, or form projects without fearing any bad effect. . . . .

'19th October. . . Am I not a very happy man to be in a situation in which I have no such reverses to fear? Please God, that I may be able to say all my life like the first Dauphin—'le roi mon père!' . . . I am too desirous of performing my duty in all respects ever in my life to fail in what I owe to my father. . . . .

'9th November. . . I do not think it would be possible to accumulate a greater amount of bad news than what is contained in your letter. The King's bad health, the mournful prognostics you make, the ill-success of our negotiations, the misunderstandings with the courts of Hanover and Cologne, all this news would be enough to make twenty Englishmen hang themselves. I am in such an ill humour in consequence, that I think I have caught the spleen. . . . Why is not the court of Vienna paid in its own coin? Why is no attempt made to sow misunderstanding and discord between it and that of Russia? Some means would afterwards be found of entering into an alliance with this latter, and perhaps even with that of Saxony. Perhaps Holland, Denmark, and Sweden would join in the game, and with a party so well leagued together as that which I am proposing, we could act on the offensive, without fearing those haughty Powers which take

upon themselves to give the law to Europe. . . . God knows that I wish the King a long life; but should the case of the Succession not come into existence during his life-time, it will be seen that there will have been no room for accusing me of sacrificing my interest to other Powers. I fear rather that I may be blamed for too great rashness and ardour. Heaven appears to have destined the King to make all the preparations which wisdom and prudence exact that we should make before beginning a war. Who knows whether Providence may not be reserving me to turn these preparations to glorious account and use them for the accomplishing of those designs for which the King's forethought intended them? If you are so hard-hearted as not to send me any good news and yet expect me to forgive you, let me have at least some consoling intelligence about the King's health, and do not alarm me in vain or trouble the repose of my dear solitude, which stands me instead of court, kingdom, and glory!'

The one question on which the whole foreign policy of Prussia hinged during the latter half of the reign of Frederick William I., was the succession in the Duchies of Juliers and Berg and, more remotely, in that of East Friesland; and it is to this that the allusions in these letters refer. It would hardly be possible within the limits of a few sentences to give a lucid *résumé* of the points in dispute. As far as Juliers and Berg were concerned, there was, according to the Prussian view, no ground for any dispute at all. In the event of the extinction of the reigning line of Electors Palatine (the line *Neuburg*), the King of Prussia was by right of inheritance the natural and sole heir to

the two Duchies. But the actual Elector, an old man without any male heir of his own, was desirous of transmitting the duchies to his successor in the Electorate (a Prince of the line of Sulzbach), a Catholic like himself, to the exclusion of the Protestant House of Brandenburg. The Elector Palatine, backed by his cousin in Bavaria and his brothers and cousins in different spiritual electorates and bishoprics, was a formidable foe. And towards the furthering of his favourite design, he had made sure beforehand, though secretly, of the support of the Imperial Court. Frederick William of Prussia, losing heart at once at sight of such formidable opponents, had been induced (in 1728) to relinquish his claims to Juliers, that he might be the more certain of succeeding to Berg unmolested.* As is known, he remained faithful to his alliance with the House of Austria through good report and evil report, demanding for his services

* By the treaty of December, 1728, Frederick William was bound to recognise the succession of the Emperor's daughter Maria Theresa (the Pragmatic Sanction) and in return for this Charles VI. was bound to secure the succession in Berg to his Prussian Majesty. But the Emperor had already, in August, 1726, secretly pledged his word to the Elector Palatine that he would support the Count Palatine of Sulzbach in his claims to *both* duchies, Juliers and Berg, and maintain his rights with the sword against all and sundry. Frederick William, as is known, true to his word, secured the recognition of the Pragmatic Sanction in the Diet against the will of *three* Electors. For which service, after that the rest of Europe had likewise given the same pledge, and the King of Prussia was no longer needed, the Emperor—threw him overboard.

only this one guarantee in return. But when in 1735 Austria and France made peace, the Emperor sacrificing his son-in-law and yielding up Lorraine, and the King of France dropping his father-in-law Stanislaus and acknowledging the Elector of Saxony as King of Poland, the King of Prussia found the ground he had stood on gone from under his feet, and the two great Powers thus joined, alike opposed to him. France refused to allow the banks of the Rhine or the town of Dusseldorf to fall into the hands of Prussia, and Frederick William was told that under the most favourable circumstances he must not count on inheriting more than one half of Berg. To crown all, the maritime Powers, England and Holland, the natural adversaries of France and Austria, seeing themselves by these preliminaries of peace shut out from continental affairs, and anxious to regain their influence, found that they could best do so at the expense of Prussia; they laid hold of the question of the Duchies as one calling for a speedy solution, and their view of the solution agreed with that of France and Austria. The policy of England in this was directed entirely by the Elector of Hanover's jealousy of the Elector of Brandenburg. The Dutch dreaded the aggrandisement of any State on their own frontier. Thus the four great Powers, the two great Catholic and the two great maritime, were unexpectedly united in opposing the Prussian claims. Things could hardly look worse than they

did. Prussia had not a single friend. Its natural position, too, in Germany was greatly weakened since Hanover and Saxony, with the crowns of Great Britain and Poland on their heads, had grown into mighty and threatening neighbours. This was how matters stood in 1737. The situation was as grave as possible, and it made Frederick's blood boil to think of it.

His zeal and indignation found vent at last in the pamphlet—'Considérations sur l'état présent du corps politique de l'Europe,'* on which Duncker has written the very interesting article before alluded to. The pamphlet was written, doubtless, in the winter of 1737–38, very likely in January of the latter year. It is in every respect an extraordinary performance for so young a man, and one so inexperienced in pamphleteering. The main, or rather the sole, object of it, to gain a powerful alliance for Prussia, is kept entirely out of sight. He writes under the disguise of an Englishman—an Englishman of the Opposition,†—who is alarmed at the sudden coalition of the despotic continental

* It is to be found in the eighth volume of the *Œuvres de Frédéric le Grand.*

† He says . . . 'If it should appear to any Power that I have expressed myself with too great liberty, let the same be informed that the fruit retains for a long time the flavour of the soil, and that, being born in a free country, it is permissible for me to speak my mind with freeborn hardihood, and also with a sincerity which is incapable of dissembling, which is unknown to the majority of mankind, and which perhaps will seem criminal to those who have been born in serfdom and brought up in slavery.'

Catholic States and disgusted at the supineness of his own government, and would stir up the government or, failing that, public opinion to a sense of the actual and, still more, the impending perils of the situation. Prussian affairs, of course, are never mentioned. The name of Prussia occurs only once, —in connection with the question of Juliers and Berg, which is alluded to carelessly, *en passant.* His aim, if successful, a turning in the line taken by the maritime Powers, would of its own accord have brought about the most powerful alliance that Prussia could hope for.

His idea was to bring out an English version of the pamphlet in England as the anonymous appeal of an English politician, and immediately afterwards his own original in Holland as a translation. He proposed too that Grumbkow should publish a review of it, all the more to arrest attention and guide public opinion. All which—the pamphlet itself with this plan for its publication—shows a settled purpose of never leaving any stone unturned, a power of adapting means to ends, and a knowledge of mankind (in this particular instance I had nearly said a knowledge of English mankind), which in this rare combination one recognises as qualities soon afterwards known to the whole world.

Things seemed to be coming to a crisis. On the 10th of February, 1738, there were handed to the Prussian Government four identical Notes from the Four Powers, France, Austria, England, and

Holland, demanding that the Prussian Government should leave to the decision of these Powers the question of the succession in Juliers and Berg, and should further pledge itself to take no step in the meanwhile that might tend to complicate the question (by moving troops, taking temporary possession, or the like). Frederick William replied by requesting such explanations on the point of the provisional occupation as might make it possible for him to give a definite answer.

This brief exposition will make it easier to understand these extracts. On the 4th of March, 1738, the Prince resumes:—

'You are astonished at my not having given any reply to the article in the Declaration. You perceived that it was not altogether to my mind. When my opinion is not asked, I can keep silence, but when it is asked it would be a breach of faith and a betrayal of the confidence placed in mé if I did not speak frankly. Remember then that you have extorted this answer, and that I should have been silent if you had not in a manner forced me to explain myself. I will confess to you then that I find in the Reply given to the mediators a conflict of grandeur and baseness which is not to my mind. The reply resembles that of a man who is not inclined to fight but wishes to look as if he were. There were only two parts to take; either to send a noble and proud reply and not play fast and loose with petty negotiations which will soon be rated at their real worth, or to bend beneath the shameful yoke which is sought to be put upon us. I am not a sufficiently acute politician to bring into unison a contrast of threatening and submissiveness. I am young

I should, perhaps, follow the impetuosity of my temperament; at all events I should not do things by halves. These are my sentiments, since you wished to know them. If they are not conformable to your own, remember that ways of thinking may be as various as men's features. If you oppose me with prudence when I speak of daring, I agree. Only remember, I pray you, that prudence is a most proper thing for the retaining of what we possess, but that nothing but daring will make new acquisitions. . . . .'

Later in the same month he writes again:

'Your reflections on the memoir (the *Considérations*) are most just, but it would not do to bring them out under the wing of the Cabinet. Believe me, it is time to write now, to prepare our way and gain men's minds; the press must work, and I am more inclined than ever to publish my paper. If you think fit I shall send it to England, where it will appear first in English; it will be sold afterwards in Holland as a translation. That is my idea. You might at the same time print your remarks on the memoir in the form of a letter from a friend to a Dutchman or an Englishman. I believe that would have a wonderful effect on the mind of the public; so much the more as it is indolent and, whenever it finds reasoning ready-made, adopts it, to save itself the trouble of reasoning for itself.'

Turning to the *Considérations* themselves for a specimen of Frederick's early pamphleteering style, let us take the following philippic on Cardinal Fleury. Having remarked that France and Austria seem to be joining hands in order to destroy the liberties of Europe—Austria aiming at despotic power in

Germany, and France at universal dominion—he recounts the reverses of the Austrian arms in the war of the Polish election, and then goes on :—

'You would have thought that after so many defeats it would have been the Emperor's business to solicit peace, but do not mistake;—let us get better acquainted with the pacific and disinterested disposition of the Cardinal. Let it be said to the honour of France and in testimony of its moderation, these conquerors crowned with laurels and apparently fatigued with their victories, offer peace to the Emperor, their vanquished foe. . . . And France by the first article of the preliminaries finds itself in possession of the Duchy of Lorraine, dismembered from the Empire. The Emperor, to make peace, deprives his son-in-law of his hereditary states. . . . Now once upon a time there prevailed in the world a prejudice which did infinite damage to the designs of France. This disadvantageous prejudice was based on an ancient error, which having been handed down had acquired great weight; it was whispered that France aspired to universal dominion, in which a great wrong was done to it. This one idea had arrested all the splendid projects of Louis XIV., and contributed not a little to pull down his power; it was quite necessary to pluck up by the roots a prejudice so pernicious, and efface the very memory of it.'

After noticing the Regencies of Orleans and Bourbon, he goes on :—

'The Cardinal de Fleury was put in his place, who not only repaired the finances and the losses that the kingdom had suffered internally, but did more,—by his ability, by the flexibility of his disposition, and by the appearance of extreme moderation, he acquired the reputation of a just and pacific minister. To perceive

the depth and wisdom of his proceedings it is necessary to remember that nothing more attracts men's confidence than a generous and disinterested disposition. The Cardinal sustained this character so well that all Europe, or rather the world, was persuaded that it was really his own. The neighbours of France slumbered in peace alongside of so good a neighbour, and the statesmen who were the most renowned for their political acumen, had laid this down as one of their unvarying fundamental maxims, viz., that as long as the Cardinal lived, considering his character and his great age, there might be perfect tranquillity as to the designs of France. This was the Cardinal's master-stroke, in virtue of which his policy is to be rated higher than that of Richelieu or Mazarin. This able minister, having brought matters to the point where he would have them, all on a sudden caused his schemes to explode. . . . The results have shown that the mere love of peace has obliged his Majesty to accept of Lorraine and relieve Germany of a province which in truth had belonged to her since time immemorial, but which was a burden to her, considering its isolated and not very convenient situation. . . . France is never in a hurry. Constantly holding fast her designs she expects everything from conjunctures; the conquests must, so to speak, come and offer themselves naturally. She hides whatever might seem studied in her plans, and judging by appearances we should think that fortune favoured her with particular care. Let us not deceive ourselves; fortune and chance are words that have no real meaning. The true fortune of France is the penetration, the forethought of her statesmen and the good measures that they adopt. . . . As for the other countries which France might conquer, it is prudent on her part not to be in too great haste, that she may fix herself the more firmly in her old conquests,

and at the same time not alarm her neighbours. Too great a noise made about her successes, might awaken the maritime Powers, which have gone to sleep for the present in the arms of false security and in the lap of indolence. . . . The Greeks looked on Philip's progress in a superficial manner, and foolishly imagined that the death of that prince would relieve them of a dangerous enemy from whom they had everything to fear. This is the very same language that is held at the present day in Europe. People flatter themselves that the death of the clever French politician will put an end to French policy, and that another minister succeeding him will not have the same designs. In fact, people please themselves with petty hopes; which is generally the consolation of weak characters and small minds. . . . .'

The last sentence of the pamphlet is characteristic:—

'It is a reproach and an ignominy to lose States; and it is injustice and criminal rapacity to conquer those to which we have no legitimate right.'

After all, the pamphlet was not published. The King's reply to the Notes of the Four Powers had more effect than Frederick had expected from it. France, *i.e.*, Cardinal Fleury, having resumed negotiations in a different tone (he foresaw a war betwixt England and Spain, and wished to prevent a possible alliance betwixt England and Prussia), it became unnecessary, and it might have been impolitic, to bring out so violent a philippic. The *Considérations*, instead of being published in England as the reflections of a discontented Eng-

lishman in 1738, did not see light till 1788,—in Holcroft's version not till 1789.

Later in the spring of 1738, when Frederick had made up his mind to postpone the publication of his work, he, not very wisely surely, sent a transcript of his manuscript to Voltaire, with injunctions, of course, to keep it a secret. Voltaire, whilst praising the performance to the skies, did not quite relish the severity of the criticism of the French principles of annexation. He thought it would be fairer to 'compare France to a rich man surrounded by people who go on ruining themselves bit by bit; he buys up their possessions at a low price.' And with a side hit at the motley composition of the German Empire, and its unwieldiness and weakness compared with the monarchic simplicity of his own country, he supplicated his Royal Highness to remember 'the serpent with many heads and the serpent with many tails; the latter could pass where the former could not.' On the whole he thought a strict alliance of the great continental Powers, Austria, France, and Spain would be the best thing that could happen. Such an alliance would keep the whole world quiet; for nobody would venture to resist. 'The English and the Dutch might then make use of their balance, with which they want to maintain the equilibrium of Europe, to weigh the bales that they get from India.'*

* *Œuvres de Frédéric*, xxi., 216.

The best known and the bulkiest sample of Frederick's prose from the Rheinsberg period, is the *Antimachiavel.* It was written rather more than a year after the *Considérations,* in the spring of 1739. The young author, before beginning, took great pains to hunt up authorities, and as he went on he was much surprised at the research that was still necessary, and the difficulty that he found in getting at accurate information about anything. The drift of the *Antimachiavel* is far more ambitious than that of the *Considérations,* and the style marks an advance, but the matter of the book fails to quicken our sympathy or curiosity except from a biographical point of view; in which latter respect, however, *i.e.,* read by the light of the writer's life, it is more interesting, I think, than even the greatest of Frederick's biographers quite admits.

At its first appearance the book naturally raised a very great stir, though that first appearance was in certain respects an unfortunate one. Having been sent to Voltaire, and carefully revised by him,* the manuscript was made over to a Dutch bookseller, Van Duren, at the Hague, whilst Frederick was yet only Prince Royal. The Accession then taking place, the author wished to withdraw the book. But to this the bookseller

* Frederick wrote :—'Rayez, changez, corrigez et remplacez tous les endroits qu'il vous plaira. Je m'en remets a votre discernement.'

would on no account agree; neither would he accept of any further revision or pruning on Voltaire's part; thinking very justly that by these methods the publication could only lose in all that was original and piquant and, therefore, from a commercial point of view, in value. In spite of remonstrances and much lively correspondence, Van Duren published the *Antimachiavel* in September, 1740. Voltaire, who was in Holland all the while, foreseeing Frederick's annoyance, immediately prepared and, in October, brought out a highly expurgated and Authorized edition. In the meanwhile a reprint of Van Duren's edition had appeared in London. Frederick, misliking them all, declared he would acknowledge none of them as his Book, but would prepare an edition of his own; which intention, much else coming between, he never found time to carry out. His original manuscript, a transcript of which only (in Keyserlingk's handwriting) had been sent to Voltaire, has come to light in our own day and, under the title of *Réfutation du Prince de Machiavel*, has been published in the *Œuvres* alongside of Van Duren's version, *L'Antimachiavel*.

So much has been written about this book that I check any desire I may have felt of tarrying longer beside it. As I said before, the chief interest it has is a biographical one; but, from this point of view, a comparison of Frederick's original with Voltaire's edition is very far from being uninviting or unin-

structive. We learn in that way that Frederick was then, as ever, astonishingly true to himself; indeed we learn something about both men. We find out why the author was so dissatisfied with the poet's alterations, and why he so decidedly refused to have anything to do with them. Many of the passages which Voltaire struck out, thinking them hazardous, or else juvenile and immature, or not in keeping with the 'tone' of the book (still less in keeping with his notion of the writer), or tautologous and faulty in style, or merely unmeaning, were passages on which the author laid stress; the removal of some of them transforming the whole drift of the argument.

Ranke, who in less than half a page has said the best that ever has been said about the *Antimachiavel*,—condensing as usual into a few sentences the essence of half a volume—has drawn attention to the sentence, 'Il doit être l'instrument de leur félicité, comme les peuples le sont de sa gloire,' as one of those expunged by Voltaire, but coming from Frederick's very heart. Equally curious is the chapter on just and unjust war. A long paragraph of Frederick's on the justice of a war waged to assert disputed rights and pretensions—his argument being that Kings, having no judge over them, *can* only plead sword in hand—is cut down by Voltaire into a sentence of three lines.*

* More interesting, perhaps, than all the rest are the sentences (read by the light of his after life):—'La prudence veut que

It will not do to pooh-pooh these youthful attempts at literary composition. They were more than attempts; they were the beginnings of what had only a broken and imperfect continuation. They give surely a very ample promise of a 'victorious intellect in the strange province of Literature,' * a promise which, as every one knows, was not fulfilled. It never was Frederick's lot to take possession of that promise. In the nature of things he was kept from so much as setting his foot in it; though in after life he sometimes imagined that there was a royal road that led thither, and that he had found it. In the *Antimachiavel* especially, the writer seems to stand on the threshold of a literary life, marshalling his untried powers, and we look forward to what is to follow with curiosity and with the uncertainty that is suggested by all beginnings. The *Considérations* occupy, I think, different ground. Though less ambitious, and though cruder in style, the pamphlet leaves a sense of completeness and conviction. I do not think it is going far out of the way to class it with a

l'on préfère les petits maux aux plus grands, et que l'on agisse tandis qu'on en est maître. Il vaut donc mieux de s'engager dans une guerre offensive lorsqu'on est libre d'opter entre la branche d'olive et la branche de laurier, que d'attendre jusqu'à ces temps désespérés où une déclaration de guerre ne peut que retarder de quelques moments l'esclavage entier et la ruine. Quoique cette situation soit fâcheuse pour un souverain, il ne saurait cependant mieux faire que de se servir de ses forces avant que les arrangements de ses ennemis, lui liant les mains, lui en fassent perdre le pouvoir.'

* Mr. Carlyle, ii. 650.

kind of writing in which Frederick, as King, became a master—those *Staatsschriften*, which he either wrote himself or inspired others to write, and in the composition of which he was so anxiously concerned that each word should express the exact meaning and nothing else. Taking the term 'State Papers' in the wide sense given to it by the present editors of the Prussian State Papers, to include political pamphlets and much else, we may perhaps claim the Crown Prince's *Considérations* as a fair prelude to the *Staatsschriften aus der Regierungszeit König Friedrichs des Grossen.**

* This is the title of the great work recently taken in hand by Droysen and Duncker, under the auspices of the Academy of Sciences of Berlin. The first volume, edited by Dr. Reinhold Koser, lies before me. To qualify what I have just said about the King's principles of composition, I must mention that in describing the composition of a particular *Exposé* of the year 1744, of which no less than eight different drafts, representing so many stages of composition, have come to light, the editor tells us that even in the drawing up of State Papers, the *Stilist* and the *Staatsmann* did sometimes come into collision after all (p. 14). Yielding on one occasion to the representations of the ministers, and consenting to withdraw a phrase, Frederick wrote on the margin of the unfinished despatch:—'Après tout, Je ne suis pas assez amoureux de cette antithèse pour ne la point sacrifier à La Politique.' (p. 452.)

In speaking of the Berlin *Akademie der Wissenschaften* I find myself sometimes calling it the Royal *Society*. 'Society,' which is more familiar to English ears, was the old name of the body before its reconstitution; 'Academy' is the present name.

CHAPTER XVI.

BIELFELD'S LETTERS.

The Letters did not go through the Post Office—Bielfeld's memory fails him—He describes a Symposium—And goes into the Diplomatic Service—His *Éloge*.

THE only man who ever fairly tried to put Posterity in his debt by giving us a set description of what he saw and heard at Rheinsberg, is Bielfeld. Unluckily there is a good deal to be said against Bielfeld and his descriptions. The man himself was certainly not a very nice sort of man, and the conditions of his life brought into play usually not the best of what was in him, but oftentimes rather the worst. He was a *parvenu*, but never quite succeeded in climbing to any of the heights the reaching of which makes *parvenu*ship a safe and honourable calling; he did not get a-head, but lingered rather a little to the rear of the companions into whose society he had been thrown when they were all starting together. He was the son of a merchant,* and was born at Hamburgh in 1717. Becoming known to the Crown Prince of Prussia in

* The father was a man of good family, who had gone into trade.

the by-ways of Freemasonry, he had the best of all possible opportunities for making a favourable impression. Frederick, who at that time was sure to see nothing but good in a 'brother,' thought him a fine, honest, clever fellow, liked him, and a little rashly invited him to Rheinsberg—perhaps even then hinting what a nice thing it would be if he could be allowed to stay there. Bielfeld, by his own account, arrived in October, 1739, his head already turned with the invitation, soon still further to be turned with the reception he got, and the society he found himself in. He has given us an account of his journey; how he took Berlin on the road, and then Potsdam, and stayed a while at either place, seeing sights and paying visits, to throw the King off the scent; and then, as it were by an afterthought, turned aside to look at Rheinsberg. He stayed a good many weeks, it may be several months—his own dates are never trustworthy, and occasionally they are altogether awanting—and then he went away; but in the spring, some weeks before Frederick's accession, and when the King was too ill to be any longer dreaded, he came back, doubtless with an appointment, or the promise of one, in his pocket. Both Prince and Princess seem to have treated him with extreme civility. We are not told how he moved about on the slippery flooring of the court; he forgets to say that he was then unused to it, but, with the lamp of later experience in his hand, he throws his feet into shadow and

tries to seem quite at his ease. It is to be borne in mind that these letters of his, though addressed to a sister, a father, &c., 'never,' as Mr. Carlyle says, 'went through a terrestrial post-office.' They were published in 1763, twenty-four years after the beginnings at Rheinsberg, and were certainly in great part written not long before the publication. Bielfeld had left Prussia by that time, and was living on an estate which he had come into the possession of through his wife, in what is now the Duchy of Saxe-Altenburg. He was angry, I suppose, with the King of Prussia—though without good reason, for Frederick seems to have extended his favour to him till the last—discontented with his own lot, and envious of many of his acquaintances; envious almost to the bursting point of some who had long been dead, and whose memories were held in high honour and enshrined as if safe from all further attack. He had nothing more to look for in life. Not unwisely he chose for his Memoirs the form of confidential letters, supposed to have been written at the time the events happened. He could thus make some display of astonishing discernment in judging character, and also easily and naturally say a good many spiteful things about people whom he had a grudge against. And what was more, this form put within his reach a rare chance of talking *at* the King, whose service he had left. But it had become difficult by that time to remember dates,—at the best a matter of very secon-

dary consequence in his eyes, I am sure. And then one is willing to believe that the very difference between past and present, the contrast betwixt former hopes and actual results, often confused him when he tried to call the past to mind. His book might perhaps be defined as, Recollections in the form of contemporaneous Letters, lighted up by after events, shaded again and darkened by the writer's disappointments, coloured by his vanity and spite, and clouded till they are often quite hazy by the egotism which made him an absent-minded observer and a careless historian.

It would be a loss of time to follow Bielfeld in his descriptions of personages. But the following fragment, somewhat condensed from the original, may serve as a specimen of his manner. One can hardly doubt that the narrative is founded on fact.

We are to suppose ourselves at Rheinsberg, in a winter afternoon. Then he goes on :—

'Towards evening I was summoned to the concert. At the close of it the Prince said to me, "Go and while away your time in the Princess's apartment; as soon as she has finished her game we shall sit down to supper and not rise till the candles are out and the champagne has brightened up our heads a little." I took the threat for a joke, knowing that merry-makings of that sort, when set about deliberately, seldom go off well. However, on my going into the apartment of her Royal Highness, she assured me that I need not look on it as a joke; and she prophesied, laughingly, that I would be no match for the Prince. And, indeed, hardly had we sat down when he

began to propose one health after another. This preparatory skirmish was followed by a whole broadside of jocose and ingenious conceits, not only on the Prince's part, but on that of others who were present. The most clouded brows brightened up, the merriment became general, and even the ladies took a share in it. After the lapse of two hours . . . not even the respect due to the presence of her Royal Highness the Princess, could restrain some of us from rising and seeking a breath of fresh air in the ante-chamber. I myself was of this number. Before going out I was still tolerably collected, but, having breathed the air, on coming in again I perceived a trifling obfuscation which was beginning to eclipse my understanding. I had had a large glass of water standing before me. The Princess, whom I had the honour of sitting opposite to, moved by roguery had ordered the water to be poured out and the glass to be refilled with Sillery, as clear as water from the fountain, the foam and froth having been blown off. Thus, having already lost my delicacy of taste, I mixed wine with other wine without knowing it and, instead of cooling myself as I hoped, drank myself into a fit of intoxication. To finish me off the Prince commanded me to place myself at his side; he talked to me of his gracious designs; he made me glance into the future as far as my then clouded eye could see, and caused me to empty glass after glass of his Lunel. In the meanwhile the rest of the party were also feeling the effects of the nectar which at this feast flowed like water. . . . At last, whether by accident or design, the Princess broke a glass. This was, as it were, the signal for boisterous merriment and an example worthy of imitation. In an instant the wine glasses flew into every corner of the room, and all the crystal, porcelain, bowls, mirrors, candlesticks, and such like, were smashed in a thousand pieces. In the midst of the havoc

the Prince was calm. But our mirth changing to tumult, he withdrew from the scuffle, and with the assistance of his pages retired to his own apartment. The Princess disappeared at the same moment. I, for my part, had the ill-luck not to fall in with a single lacquey to guide me or humanely support my tottering frame. Thus I strayed too near to the great staircase, and fell from the top to the bottom, where I remained lying unconscious. I might have perished there but for an old woman, one of the domestics, who proved my guardian angel. Having been led to the spot by some lucky chance, she took me for the big poodle and, giving me a kick in the belly, called me by an ugly name. But then perceiving that I was a human being and, what is more, a young courtier, she felt her heart moved with compassion. She called for help. My servant came running. I was carried to bed. A surgeon was sent for. I was bled. I was bandaged. I was restored to my senses. The next morning they talked of trepanning me. However, I was delivered from that fear, but I had to keep my bed for a fortnight, during which time the Prince was so gracious as to visit me every day and do all that he could to contribute to my recovery. On that first morning the whole castle was sick to death. Neither the Prince nor any one of his cavaliers could leave his bed; consequently, her Royal Highness the Princess was alone at table.'*

Bielfeld was one of those members of the Rheinsberg Household who seem in all soberness to have believed that, in the very moment in which Frederick mounted the throne, they, his attendants, were all of them to be raised at one bound to one knows

* *Lettres Familières.* Tome i., pp. 83–88.

not what posts in the State, and that riches and honours would then and thereafter be showered upon them with oriental profusion. Things did not come to pass in this fashion. There never in the history of the world was an Accession more truly kingly than Frederick's. The State in that instant becoming supreme in his regard, to its welfare, as a matter of course, all other interests were thenceforward to range themselves subordinate. But, also as a matter of course, he meant his personal friends to rise high; he had chosen them, as he fancied, for their merit, and he was fond of them. As for Bielfeld, in his own youthful ardour, he thought him a young fellow of extraordinary parts and acquirements, who, if once he had worked himself out of the narrow traditions of his Hamburgh education and gone through some training for official life, might turn out a fine statesman. Bielfeld himself, whose gifts were overrated by Frederick, had quite other ideas about official duties. The discrepancy peeps through in his own account of an interview he had with the King, a few days after the Accession:—

'The King,' he tells us, 'said to me with much kindness that he destined me for foreign affairs, and that his intention was to further me in that career, but as these affairs required routine and training, he had to that end selected me to accompany the Count Truchsess* to

* The special ambassador sent to notify Frederick's accession to George II.

Hanover, that the journey would not be a long one, and that he would promote me on my return. I confess that this is rather a small beginning,' &c.

He might have made it a great beginning, but he did not. He failed wholly to rise to a first rank in the diplomatic or any other walk. He thought all drudgery beneath him, and he seems to have come home from his six months' service in Hanover and London no further on in routine than when he started. The King, disappointed, gave him the title of *conseiller de légation* and, I suppose, tried too to give him some employment. Some years later (after the death of Jordan, with whom Bielfeld seems to have kept house in Berlin), anxious to push him forward, and thinking that his talents might lie in some other direction, his Majesty appointed him governor or tutor to Prince Ferdinand. In 1747 he actually made him Curator of the Prussian universities (in Jordan's room), and in 1748 he created him a Baron and a Privy Councillor. But it was all of no use. Bielfeld was not found full grown in any post. About 1755, I think, after some *démêlés* with the King, he left Prussia altogether, and settled—having got married to a rich wife in the meanwhile—on an estate in Altenburg. There, and in Hamburgh, he spent the rest of his life, writing books of no very great value. He was estimable in private life ; in the private life of the province or of his native town all the more

estimable no doubt because of his former greatness, or rather great expectations.

He died in 1770. And he got his *Éloge* in the Berlin Academy—the model of an impartial *Éloge.* The writer, Formey I take for granted, after speaking of some of Bielfeld's earlier works as 'interesting, though sketchy and very incorrect,' says it will be best to pass over in silence the *Amusemens dramatiques,* 'which never amused anybody but their author.' After which he mentions honourably the *Institutions politiques* * as the deceased gentleman's *chef d'œuvre:* 'not a mere compilation,' the order and the selection being so creditable to the compiler, and the notes such as 'not to disfigure it.' This work, it appears, was severely handled by the critics, and M. de Bielfeld did himself 'even more honour by the moderation of his replies than by their solidity.' The *Lettres familières* are dismissed as being 'too familiar.' The other criticisms are in the same strain, and then the eulogist sums up:—

'Such was M. de Bielfeld, and though I have observed in respect of him the sincerity from which I never depart, I believe myself to have written an *Éloge* of him, and certainly it was my intention to do so, because his memory is dear to me, and I look back upon him as a worthy colleague and friend.'†

* A big book in several volumes. There is an English translation of it.

† *Histoire de l'Académie royale des sciences et belles lettres.* Berlin, 1772.

CHAPTER XVII.

SUHM.

Frederick and Suhm by the Fireside—Suhm translates Wolff's Metaphysics—Demonstrates the Existence of a fine Soul—Mimi lights the Translation at the Candle—Suhm goes to St. Petersburg—Frederick is threatened with bankruptcy—King Frederick William studies Logic—Death of Suhm.

JUST about the time of his settling at Rheinsberg, Frederick, if he had been asked, would very likely have named philosophy as the foremost of his pursuits, or at least the one on which he laid the greatest stress; meaning by philosophy a certain course of metaphysical speculation largely mixed with morals and religion. With aims which at first at least were rather practical than purely speculative,* he had for several years been trying to open his mind to these things, hoping, as many another ardent young fellow of great parts but scanty training has hoped, to penetrate thus some mighty secret which, though it was still completely hidden

* The distinguished historian, Professor Droysen, thinks that Frederick took up the doctrine of Predestination and similar questions merely as 'problems to exercise his acuteness and learn the art of debate, as the manner of youth is.' It is the manner, unquestionably, of *university* youth. But of the university, even in his student years, there was not a trace about Frederick.

from him, did not seem far away—a secret which, when found out, would at once let in a flood of light on the life of man, placing it in the full blaze of Heaven's noonday, and, at the same time and more than all, show himself where and how to guide his own steps. How any such secret was best to be come at, he could but wonder and guess. He was sadly at sea in respect of helps and authorities and the principles and methods of research. We know how narrow the drift of his early training had been. He had not read very much or connectedly. The ancients were sealed books to him except in translations, which I daresay had not then come much in his way. Many of the speculative writers of modern times were certainly just as little known to him except by hearsay and in fragments. One has little difficulty in believing him when, at such an outlay of solemn adjuration, he pledges his word of honour to Grumbkow that he has 'never read Spinoza.'

He was on the high road from the Calvinistic orthodoxy of his boyhood to plain materialism when he took up the writings of Wolff, of Marburg. Wolff, a man of great powers and learning, an accurate thinker, a sober writer not too hard to understand, and an earnest and tolerant believer in revelation, was just the one to catch hold of a young man in Frederick's mood. The crusade set on foot against Wolff by ecclesiastical bigots, and the troubles he had to undergo, were exactly fitted to enlist Frederick

on his side. At the time of those troubles and of Wolff's banishment from Prussia, he had been too young to know or care much about the matter, but when he afterwards read Wolff's books, the thought of the philosopher's wrongs went far of course to quicken his apprehension of the philosophy.*

The first beginnings of his acquaintance with Wolff are to be traced, I suppose, to Suhm, the Saxon Envoy at the Court of Prussia. The personal acquaintance of Suhm himself had been made in Berlin, of course, in the society of the Court, at I know not what early period, when Frederick was little more than a boy. Neither do I know when their acquaintance had begun to grow out of the bland grins and international commonplaces that are so largely and cordially dealt out to each other by princes and foreign diplomatists, into something like a friendship between man and man. The Saxon Envoy soon became one of the Crown Prince's snug 'set.' Before very long we find him by Frederick's fireside in the palace *Unter den Linden* late in the winter nights, the two in deep delightful talk, perhaps after some brilliant merry-making, when the rest of the world has gone to bed. Those 'winters,' the three or four carnival weeks of holiday, were all too short and had to be made the most of. Of Suhm one knows nothing but

* In 1723 Frederick William ordered Wolff to quit the Prussian dominions within forty-eight hours on pain of a halter.

what is good and pleasant. He certainly was very loveable and gentle and well-informed. As he was nearly thirty years older than the Prince, the latter looked up to him, liked to talk things over with him, and hear what he had to say about them. What the Envoy did say was usually something mild and sprightly and yet wise withal. It was not long till Frederick, according to custom, adopted a name of endearment for him,—in this instance 'Diaphane,' a name suggestive of light, limpidity, and translucency. Preuss thinks that it may have been an attempt to render in French the German '*Durchlaucht*,' serenity or transparency—the usual title of princes of less than royal rank in Germany, which is ordinarily translated into English by 'Serene Highness,'—and that there may have been a joke at the bottom which is lost to us. Anyhow, it was meant to describe purity of character and a faculty of conveying light. As an epithet it was well chosen, and, indeed, it not only fitted the man himself, but it harmonised with the whole intercourse and specially with the correspondence of Frederick and him, which from first to last was always sweet and clear.

It is to Suhm, who, as Saxon Envoy, sent home to Dresden any news or gossip of the day that he thought might interest King August, that we are indebted for this glimpse of Frederick at the age of twelve. (Weber, who has deciphered the despatch,

gives us a summary of it only, not the Envoy's own words.)

Once in the year 1724 King Frederick William stood godfather to a son of Field-Marshal Grumbkow's. There was a good deal of hard drinking on the occasion, and the King overloaded the Field-Marshal with assurances of his gracious favour; to which assurances the Field-Marshal always gave the same reply, 'Yes, your Majesty, if I could only depend upon it!' The King then turned to his son Frederick, with the words, 'I should like to know what is going on in that little head. I know very well that he does not think like me, and that there are people who put other notions into him and teach him to find fault with everything; but they are scoundrels.' Having repeated this over again, he said to the Crown Prince:—'Don't forget what I am going to say to you. Always keep a good big army; you cannot have a better friend, and you cannot get on without it. Our neighbours would like nothing better than to throw us head over heels; I know their designs and you will come to know them too some day. Don't let your head run on vanity but on what is solid and worth having. Set your heart on a good army and on money; that is what the fame and safety of a Prince depend on.' The King accompanied these words with little pats on the Prince's cheek, which always grew smarter and smarter till at last they differed in nothing from boxes on the ear. He broke some china plates at the same time, whereupon Grumbkow, following his exalted guest's example, completed the devastation by smashing all the rest.*

It will be remembered that Frederick William

* *Aus vier Jahrhunderten.* Von Dr. Karl von Weber. Neue Folge. i. 104.

once (in 1727) threatened to hang Suhm. A Prussian recruiting officer in Saxony having been caught and sentenced to be hanged, the King of Prussia declared he would take reprisals on the Saxon Envoy. Suhm, dreading any such infringement on the law of nations, fled in haste across the frontier to Lübben, where he was scolded by his own King, August for his pusillanimity and ordered to go back to Berlin, which by that time, of course, it was safe enough to do, Frederick William having cooled down to the point of ample apologies and assurances that it 'was all a mistake.'

The charm of Frederick's and Suhm's letters lies less in the subject-matter or the style, than in our being made to see how great a boon and blessing their friendship was to both of them. Suhm is so devoted and worthy, and the Prince is so frank and so fond of his *cher Diaphane*. The due allowance for difference of rank being made, nothing can be more natural than their intercourse. There never was any misunderstanding between them. In after years, Frederick's gift of banter—a gift bestowed quite out of place on an absolute monarch—often put his friendships in danger. Though he knew better than anybody else that he neither could nor would be bantered in turn, he would persist in exercising his gift, with the consequences that might have been foreseen. The present correspondence was never clouded or troubled by

offences. Death put an end to it very early. Whilst it lasted, the *sobriquet* was kept up, of course; Frederick did not readily let such things drop. And in the hour of death, when taking an eternal leave, Suhm, on his side, signed himself, 'Your faithful Diaphane.'

In the course of one of their fireside talks, and in answer, doubtless, to one of Frederick's many questions, Suhm must have recommended him to read one of Wolff's books. Frederick was very willing to read anything, but when he found out that the books were written in German, he broke down at the crabbed unfamiliar tongue. Des Champs, as it happened, was just then translating the 'Logic,' but had not finished it, and at the best it was not thought the right thing to begin with. Suhm then of his own accord, or by the Prince's urgent wish, undertook to translate the Treatise on Metaphysics for him. And this was the starting-point of the Correspondence. The Prince having left Berlin, Suhm sent him the sheets of the translation as they were got ready—about a sheet once a fortnight—and a letter along with each. The translation was finished in less than a year; but the correspondence, once begun, was carried on. It may be said to fall wholly in the Rheinsberg period. The earliest letter, which is Suhm's, is written in March, 1736, just about the time when Frederick began to make trial of keeping house at Rheinsberg by himself; and the last, which is

also Suhm's, is of November, 1740, when Frederick, half a year after his accession, along with his Queen and the whole Court, was again residing there and taking thought for the first Silesian war.

Suhm never came to Rheinsberg; he was, during the greater part of the time, very far beyond reach. Once or twice Frederick, not too successfully, tried to give him some description of the place and of the manner of life led in it. But our hopes of a *tableau* of the interior from the hand of the master are raised only to be dashed again. Frederick had what Voltaire might well call a *main rapide:* a hand that had never practised in the Dutch school, and *left out* the outlines. Thus:—

'I think that you will not be sorry if I say a few words about our rural pastimes; for with persons who are dear to us we are fond of entering into the most petty details. We have divided our occupations into two classes; the first of these being the useful, the second, the agreeable. In the number of the useful I reckon the study of philosophy, of history, and of languages. The agreeable are music, masquerades, the tragedies and comedies that we perform, and the presents that we make. However, our serious occupations always have the preference,'* &c., &c. Alas!

It was not very long till Suhm got tired of his task and tried to be let off. It was dull and irksome work; and on the plea, which he put forward

* *Œuvres, &c.*, tome xvi., p. 290.

sincerely enough, no doubt, that Wolff's terms were better than his own French equivalents for them, and that the German language was better fitted than the French for the treatment of abstract matters, he tried to persuade the Prince to read the *Métaphysique* in the original. *That* Frederick would by no means do. Diaphane's French was so beautiful; there was no living without it and his delightful letters. Anything else in the world he would do to please him. If Diaphane were to resolve 'to write and speak henceforth nothing but Chinese,' he, the Prince, would be the man to learn that tongue in order to profit by his conversation. But Wolff's German! He has already been comparing some parts of the translation with the original, and has found that the *Métaphysique* 'has in no instance lost;'—likes the translation, in fact, the best of the two!

Quite early, after receiving the first chapters, Frederick cries out:—

'I begin at last to perceive the dawning of a day which does not yet quite shine before my eyes, and that it is in the possibility of things that I may have a soul, and even that it may be an immortal one. M. Achard has sent me a long article on the subject . . . . I hold to Wolff. Provided he proves to me that my indivisible being is immortal, I shall be tranquil and contented. The benefit that you will derive from the trouble that you have taken will be this, that my friendship for you, instead of ending with my life, will be immortal like my soul, and that that soul, feeling that next to God it owes its existence to

yourself, will never fail to give you marks of friendship,' &c. 'What glory,' cries Suhm in return, 'for our philosopher to prove the existence of the finest soul that there is in the universe, and what felicity for me to be his interpreter! . . . . What a reward for my obedience! And how much dearer has the immortality of my own soul become to me since the assurance that your Royal Highness has just given me!'*

After a while the delight becomes vaguer. We still hear a great deal, both in prose and verse, about the Torch of Truth coming down from Heaven and shedding its light through the writer's *esprit*, which has hitherto languished in darkness. But before the year is out—in great part, doubtless, as a result of the correspondence with Voltaire and Voltaire's reasonings about the *être simple ou indivisible*—Frederick's satisfaction with Wolff's demonstrations has got a shake. In November, 1736, Suhm being in Dresden soliciting a new appointment, but still translating the *Métaphysique* and forwarding it chapter by chapter, Frederick writes to him :—

'I take too lively an interest in everything that concerns you not to be sensibly touched by the little success that your stay in Dresden has had. It would have been very pleasant to me to see you here. The journey, it is true, would not have led to anything; but you would at least not have run the risk of being deceived in thinking you came to see a friend. You would have found me

* *Œuvres, &c.*, tome xvi., pp. 255, 256.

charmed to see you, and ready to provide you with all the enjoyments that are at my command. It is true my house is not a place where people can amuse themselves noisily; but are not repose, tranquillity, and the search for truth much to be preferred to the loud and frivolous pleasures of this world? I have never spent such happy days as those I have had here. Nothing is awanting to my enjoyment but the pleasure of seeing you. If that is not possible, you will not be displeased at my making an appointment with you in Berlin, where I am sure to be by the beginning of December. And as our fate does not allow of our meeting more than once a year, do not deprive me this year of that satisfaction; for to begin the new one with you is the happiest omen I can wish for. I seem to see you again at my fireside, and to hear you talking delightfully on subjects which we neither of us know a great deal about, but which nevertheless assume an air of probability in your mouth. There is no denying that Wolff says fine things and good things, but he is open to attack all the same, and as soon as we go back to first principles there is nothing for it but to own our ignorance. . . . . I shall soon begin to *attiser le feu* that is to warm you. Do not, I pray you, let my trouble be thrown away. . . . .'*

They did, I believe, meet in Berlin in December, 1736, but very hurriedly. Suhm had suddenly been appointed to go to St. Petersburg as Saxon Envoy, and he had to start on his long winter's journey before the end of the year. Whether they contrived first to snatch some snug evenings in front of the fire, I know not; if so, these were the

* *Œuvres, &c.*, xvi., 297, 298.

last of that sort,—they never met again. The parting was a great blow to both of them, particularly to Frederick. On the 22nd of January, 1737, he back at 'Remusberg,' writes:—

'Whilst you are travelling hundreds of leagues,' [Suhm had, in fact, a frightful journey of nearly two months] 'here am I in the profoundest tranquillity. You know all about my pursuits, so it would be superfluous to dwell upon them. An absurd incident, which had nearly thrown them into disorder, has given me something to laugh at, and material for jokes to our whole party. My dear Mimi, the faithful companion of my retreat, seeing me the other day studying Wolff's Metaphysics, of which you have been the amiable interpreter, was impatient at my preferring a most truthful and reasonable book to her own frivolous *badinage* and the illusions of her charms. The hour of supper having caused me to forsake my reading to attend to the wants of my body, my monkey, of all monkeys the most monkey, slips its chain, seizes *la Métaphysique*, holds it to the candle, and is delighted at seeing it on fire. Fancy my feelings on returning to the room and beholding poor Wolff in flames! To run, get water, and extinguish the flames, was one act. By good luck, however, it is only the copy that is burned; the original is intact. . . . . Chasot is in a serious rage at the accident, as he is obliged to copy the original over again. . . . . You are not satisfied with being useful to me in matters of philosophy, you are going to help me in history also. A book so useful and so highly fitted to instruct young people of my age as the 'Life of Prince Eugene,' will give me a great deal of pleasure. As you have so generously taken on yourself the whole trouble of sending it, I shall give myself no concern about it, not even about the binding. I am sure

that you will take that trouble, too, and also see that it is properly packed, to keep the rain from the engravings, which would be spoiled. I wish, my dear Diaphane, that I in my turn were in a position to supply you with a select library. . . . .'*

Mimi had done no real harm; yet, none the less, the monkey's act and these ashes of metaphysics on the floor of the turret chamber, are either a turning point or the symbol of one. There is little more of Wolff in this Correspondence or in any other correspondence of Frederick's. Whilst Suhm remained in Russia—for three years and a half—Frederick and he wrote to each other often. But the staple of their letters was not Wolff; it was 'The Life of Prince Eugene,' and such like. The Life of Prince Eugene, 'so useful and instructive for young people,' the 'binding,' the 'engravings,' the 'Last Edition,' the 'Memoirs of the Academy of St. Petersburg,' further on 'Thirty Skins of black martens' and other furs, were all different names for—loans of money. Suhm had undertaken to borrow for the Prince, who was often in sore need. To write about it openly was, of course, not to be thought of. Writing behind these thin veils was itself very dangerous; had any of the letters fallen into the King's hands, he would have been very stupid if he had not understood them.

* *Œuvres, &c.*, xvi., 312, 313.

'I am at the end of all my reading,' writes the Prince (March 23rd, 1737), 'and I am waiting impatiently for the Life of Prince Eugene. One day lately somebody asked me for an extract from it; I excused myself by saying that the original was not yet in my hands. . . . .' Later:—'I have been asked for a dozen copies of the book' [twelve thousand dollars]. 'Those who ordered them torment me for them daily, as if I had a printing-press in the house. . . . . Do, I beseech you, make an agreement with the booksellers. . . . .' (June, 1737):—'You can imagine the pleasure that the Memoirs of your Academy have given me. They have freed me from a very great embarrassment with regard to some literary questions which I had a dispute about, and which they have settled. . . . .' (March, 1738):—'You could not believe with what pertinacity people ask me for books. There are persons who carry it to inconsiderateness. . . . When those that you are going to be so good as to part with in my favour arrive, I shall have to yield them up to their voracity forthwith, and my library will not so much as see them. . . . .'

A year later (spring of 1739) he still writes:—

'Our plan of a library is getting on at a crab's pace. . . . . Good books are rare; and those who have them do not like to part with them. . . . . The only good book that you have sent me from Russia is *à vau l'eau*. I have been borrowing books, thinking that I could pay for them, and now I have been obliged to return them to the proprietors. Besides, I have read all my old books, and am left without anything whatever to read. That is very disagreeable, particularly when one is anxious to improve oneself. I still trust to your *savoir faire*, and flatter myself that he who disentangled the chaos of

Leibnitz expounded by Wolff, will be able to furnish me with materials for further instruction. . . . .' (September 26th, 1739):—'I wish you could make an agreement with your Academy to send me two copies yearly like those you sent me the first year of your stay in Russia, for the perusal of them was most instructive, and the truths they contained most admirable for practical application. Being yourself a philosopher, familiar with these branches of scholarship, I am persuaded that you will have a clear perception of the good I shall derive from these studies. I shall wait for your answer with great impatience. . . . .' Another time, 'ordering' thirty skins of black '*martres*,' these 'being sold by thirties,' he says twenty-seven will be enough for a cloak for himself and Suhm had better keep 'three to make a pair of cuffs' [three thousand dollars].

When the mask was too much in their way, they had recourse to cypher, pretending to send each other 'arithmetical problems.' Now and then by some trusty hand it was possible to write without any reserve, but that was seldom. The person whom Suhm borrowed the money from was Biron the Duke of Courland. After receiving the first loan, Frederick wrote that if it had come a fortnight later he 'should have been lost.' But the danger warded off once came back ever and anon. Duke Biron himself had 'terrible debts' and no money, and though it was 'true that he had a great resource' (in the Empress Anne), and was most willing to oblige the Crown Prince of Prussia, still

* *Œuvres, &c.*, xvi., 316, 320, 327, 352, 361, 366, 378.

the first instalment was long of being followed by a second. Suhm very soon hinted that it would be better to deal directly with the 'resource' than with Biron; the resource being full of love and esteem for the Prince, and doubtless most anxious to show him any attention possible. At this proposal, Frederick, much startled by it, in the first place most firmly shook his head. 'I may have obligations to a Duke, but think of the consequences in the case of an Empress.'* But time going on, and the shoe pinching harder and harder, there was at last no help for it but to take the relief and leave the consequences. In December, 1739, Frederick gave notice that he would write to the Empress, if Suhm would send him the rough draft of a letter to her. 'I must have twenty-four thousand dollars a year,' he says; 'of that you can take two thousand a year to yourself. . . .' This was in deep cypher, as well it might be,—'an algebraic problem that the learned Algarotti has sent me.'

For one moment the Prince returns to pleasanter themes, having an astonishing piece of news to communicate :—

'The news of the day' (October, 1739), 'is that the King is reading Wolff's Philosophy for three hours a day; for which, Praise be to God! Well! here we have lived to witness the triumph of Reason. . . . . Would

* *Œuvres, &c.*, xvi., 356.

you have believed two years ago that such a phenomenon would have been seen in our day? . . . . I will tell you more. Wolff has been offered a pension of a thousand dollars, with five hundred to his son, and a promise of a pension to his wife in the event of widowhood.'*

* It was all quite true, though incredible. As for the fine offers, Wolff shook his head at them. He firmly refused to put his neck a second time within reach of a halter and stayed at Marburg (till Frederick invited him, when he came readily enough). But none the less Frederick William, with the zeal of a convert, did what in him lay for the spread of Wolff's principles. By an edict of 1739 —with a notable rebound from the threat of hanging the philosopher sixteen years before—the students of theology were directed to get themselves 'thoroughly well grounded in philosophy and in a rational system of logic, such as that of Professor Wolff.' And in private life too his Majesty, who never did things by halves, suddenly insisted on the use of premises and conclusions. Having received a letter from the commandant of Wesel, General Dossow, an officer who stood high in his esteem, the King, looking for the flaws in the general's syllogisms, was shocked beyond measure at being unable to find any syllogisms at all. He carried the letter the same evening to the *Tabagie*, and caused it to be read aloud and criticised 'on logical principles.' The whole *Tabagie* agreed that the writer of it 'raisonnait comme un coffre.' Whereupon the King replied to him:—'My dear General. I have received your letter and seen by it that you must either have been sleepy or drunk, or that you are a confused thinker and form your ideas quite incorrectly. You contradict yourself in your *raisonnements*. I advise you therefore as a friend, although you are advanced in life, do as I do, learn to think rationally and draw right conclusions, and then you will also be able to reason correctly.' His Majesty sent a similar reply to a clergyman who had just been promoted to the office of Superintendent (Overseer or Bishop) in some part of the Mark:—'I see by your letter that you studied at Halle, and think yourself a good divine. But I see at the same time that you are a bad logician and form incorrect ideas. I advise you therefore, purchase a copy of Wolff's writings, and above all things learn logic. Then you will not write such preposterous stuff.' (Weber, *Aus vier Jahrhunderten*. Neue Folge. i. 139.)

It does not appear that the letter to the Empress Anne ever was written, much less acted upon. A few weeks more and the King's failing health made it easier for the Prince to keep his creditors at bay; in less than half a year he was able to pay them all. In June, 1740, he says to Suhm. . . . . 'Ask your Duke in my name, whom does he wish the money to be paid to?'

The end of this Correspondence was tragical. Suhm had been a trusty friend. He had at great personal risk helped and served the Prince, and drudged for him without ever asking thanks. Frederick, knowing this well, had always looked forward to the day when he should be able to return kindness for kindness, and enjoy Diaphane's 'delightful talk,' without let or hindrance. Diaphane himself, who was broken down in health and straitened in means, had also, as was natural, looked forward with some desire to that day. At last Frederick ascended the throne. Four weeks afterwards (June 29th, 1740), he wrote:—

'My dear Diaphane,—I hoped amongst the compliments you pay me on the change in my title, to find a few words about yourself, but I have had the mortification of not finding anything about you or me that I call interesting. I beg you, therefore, to let me know whether you are the man to give up an embassy in order to lead the meditative life of a sage, and whether you will find anything in my society to compensate you for political life? . . . .'

To this the other, who had waited for the King to begin, answered, Yes, Sire! and at once applied for his dismissal from the Saxon diplomatic service. This was granted, and by the end of August he was able to present his letters of recall, and to start from St. Petersburg.* But then he was obliged to go to Warsaw, where the Elector of Saxony (King of Poland) was keeping court, to receive his dismissal in person. On the road he fell ill, and was laid up at Memel and elsewhere. Frederick was looking out for him impatiently; and Suhm himself, glad at having got away from Russia and from the tear and wear of diplomatic life, but infirm and greatly needing rest, was also impatiently longing for the snug sunny future in store for him in Berlin. He reached Warsaw about the end of September. Till then he had received letter on letter from Frederick, short ones, but written, all of them, in the old hearty playful style. In Warsaw several notes reached him, written by a secretary,† stiff, short, and formal notes, merely

* It is painful to know that Manteuffel was waiting eagerly for Suhm's arrival and counting on his being appointed successor to Thulemeier, the Minister of State (who died August 4th 1740), expecting, as a matter of course, that through him he himself and his Dresden employers would at once be put in possession of the deepest secrets of the Prussian government, more directly and much more accurately than they could get them from any subordinate. (Droysen. *Geschichte der Preussischen Politik*, v. 1, 117.)

† Preuss does not say so, but it is plain. These notes are awanting in the original edition of the Correspondence with Suhm.

acknowledging the receipt of his letters. The change was owing to the King's attack of quartan fever; but Suhm, who was by that time a dying man, though at first alarmed at hearing of the fever, was plainly much disturbed by the strange handwriting. He himself continued to send word of his own state. From week to week, the doctors dieting him with *bouillon* and milk, he hoped to pick up sufficient strength to set out on his journey again. On the 28th of October he wrote in an ecstasy to say that he had just received a gracious dismissal in due form; that he had now reached the highest pinnacle of happiness to which his wishes could ever have aspired; and that he at last *belonged* to his Majesty—'my Master, my gracious Protector, my Friend, my King,'—ending by begging Frederick to send him a few words in his own handwriting. Only six days afterwards (November 3rd, 1740), he wrote again :—

'SIRE! It is in vain that they would buoy me up with hopes. It is in vain that the love of life, in addition to the powerful attractions of the smiling perspective that was opened to me, would seek to foster the illusion of my heart with the ardour of its desires. It is in vain, in one word, that I would hide it from myself; each hour, each moment, causes me to feel that the end of my life is approaching. And, however much I might have wished to spare your Majesty the pain of this intelligence, if it were possible that it should never reach you, and never for an instant trouble the repose of your great and sensitive heart, a duty too sacred and impor-

tant is connected with it, to allow me to hide it. Yes, Sire! it is only too certain that I am on the brink of the grave. Alas! I suffer shipwreck in port. . . . .'

He goes on to recommend his four motherless children and his sister to the King's favour, explaining at some length how he would wish the children to be brought up, and having done this he declares himself perfectly tranquil on their score. Then he adds :—

'Now there is nothing left for me to do but to detach my heart from this earth, and turn it towards the eternal fountain of all life and happiness. Ah! it is at this moment that I feel all the might of the tender bond that attaches me to the most amiable, the most virtuous mortal whom the goodness of Heaven has caused me to meet with during the pilgrimage of my days on earth. Ah! it is at this moment that I feel all that it costs me to burst that bond. Nevertheless, my steadfastness will triumph, for a great and consoling hope sustains me, the firm hope that whatever has been created to love, will re-enter one day into the exhaustless and eternal fountain of all love. The hour approaches; I already feel my strength failing me; we must part (*il faut se quitter*). Adieu. One tear more—it bathes your feet. Oh! deign to regard it, great King, as a pledge of the tender and unchanging attachment with which your faithful Diaphane was devoted to you till his last sigh.' *

On the 8th of November he died. His last letter and the news of his death both reached the

* *Œuvres, &c.*, xvi., 403, 404.

King at Rheinsberg. It was the first break in Frederick's circle. He wrote (November 16th, to Algarotti) :—

'I was made for sad events. I have just heard of the death of Suhm, my intimate friend, who loved me as sincerely as I loved him, and showed till his death the confidence that he had in my friendship and tenderness. I would rather have lost millions. We do not find a second time a person with so much mind joined to so much sincerity and feeling. My heart will wear mourning for him, and that in a fashion much deeper than we wear it for the most of our relations. His memory will last as long as a drop of blood circulates in my veins, and his family shall be mine. Adieu. I cannot speak about anything else. My heart is bleeding, and the pain is too keen to let me think of anything but this wound.'

Suhm's brother and sister and the four children were at once sent for to Berlin. Mademoiselle de Suhm received a pension for the rest of her life, and the children were brought up at the King's expense under her care. The three sons all went into the army, and the daughter was in due time married. The eldest son, having had a leg shot away at the Battle of Prague, afterwards received a civil appointment.

In 1785, forty-five years after the death of Diaphane, Frederick received a letter from this son, then in his turn on a death-bed, recommending *his* three sons, who were also all going into the

army, to his Majesty's gracious protection. His Majesty at once replied :—

'I am very sorry to learn by your letter of the 12th, that you are approaching your last moment. The name of Suhm is indeed dear to me. I have known several of that family who were distinguished for their merit, and had gained my esteem. Your father and yourself were of the number, and your sons will also have a part in it, if they walk in your steps.'

The note—of course in the hand of a secretary—with its brief official commemoration of a bygone intimacy, is a curious contrast to the youthful correspondence. The King's voice, as he goes back on the old friendship and the early loss, is toneless; his words are grave and formal. There is no sound of human sentiment in them nor message of human fellowship, but merely the signification of his sovereign approval of a fitly spent life. It could not well be otherwise. There had been a time when his voice was very familiar with many of the accents of human speech. But that was long ago. It was about half a century since he had been wont to talk as friend to friend; it was nearly as long since those who had listened and answered, the friends and companions of his youth, had all gone to their eternal rest. Since then his voice had been accustomed to speak words of command chiefly, often very loud words. It was now worn; the melody and the ring had all gone out

of it. The King himself, walking softly and quite alone in the gathering darkness, was drawing very near to the House of Silence. Far from Remusberg! Far enough from *la Métaphysique de M. Wolff* and harassing small debts! Another year, and the 'great sensitive heart' itself had ceased to beat; the 'LAST OF THE KINGS' had been taken to his People.

Reading Suhm's letters now-a-days we, with our knowledge of the writer's character, often wonder a little at the flattery that is in them; at the quantity of it, and the prime quality. Frederick himself once or twice remonstrates, perhaps *pro formâ*. It is as loud and startling as the scream of a railway whistle, a great blast always ready to be turned on at will by the jerk of a single finger-joint, screeching, deafening, inorganic; and it has the same effect on those of us who are not going by that train at all but are merely looking on from the platform,—we twist our heads this way and that, and wish that almost *anything* would happen to put a stop to it. At the time when it came to Rheinsberg once a fortnight, along with a fresh fascicle of *la Métaphysique*, it was not altogether disagreeable,—anything but that. But thinking of it, and of the man who wrote it, and of other men then and afterwards who wrote the like of it and worse, we wonder

less that even Frederick the Great was puzzled what to think, and sometimes gave men up altogether and took to his hateful monkeys and his lap-dogs.

CHAPTER XVIII.

VOLTAIRE.

Frederick's regard for Voltaire—His opinion of him early and late—His admiration is reciprocated—He sends him a Walking-stick and his Portrait—Keyserlingk goes to fetch the Golden Fleece—But brings only a fragment of it—Frederick sends his Poems to Voltaire—Who thinks that the love of letters ought to be encouraged—Frederick does not look for posthumous fame—Voltaire and Madame du Châtelet sing a hymn—Frederick and Madame du Châtelet differ on the origin of fire—Last Letter from Rheinsberg—Frederick's real mind is not in his Letters.

We shall not go far wrong in taking it for granted that Voltaire's letters, more perhaps than anything else, had a good deal to do with making Frederick wary about committing himself to the results of speculative inquiry, and eventually with weaning him from metaphysics altogether. Along with the letter with which he opened the Correspondence,* Frederick sent Voltaire a treatise concerning Wolff, promising him a translation of Wolff himself as soon as it should be published;—by way of sample, so we gather, of Prussian manufactures. Voltaire was, of course, all thanks for the gift,—for such a gift from such a giver—promised himself no

* For the commencement of the correspondence with Voltaire, Frederick's first letter and Voltaire's answer, see Mr. Carlyle, vol. ii., p. 59, &c.

end of instruction from it, and picked up courage to hope that all his own ignorance and stupidity were going to be put to flight very shortly under this supreme teaching;—the darkness of a solitary student in Champagne dispelled by a royal Sun rising upon him from foreign parts. At the same time, as if to show how very ignorant he was, he began in great humility to point out this and that 'position' and 'conclusion' of Monsieur Wolff's, which he, with his present want of insight, was unable to understand. Finding his difficulties acknowledged, even graciously shared, by-and-by he brought forward more of them; and in a wonderfully short time he spoke his mind with hardly any reserve. It turned out that he disagreed with Wolff, not only in nearly all conclusions, but in the manner of trying to get at these; in fact, that he thought the country spread before him most likely a *mirage*, at all events not worth reaching, and that he disliked the road that led to it.

It is wonderful how soon Frederick became of the same mind. Not that he ever to the end of life was *quite* of one mind with Voltaire on speculative matters; there was always a distinctly marked difference in their opinions and modes of perception —but to the ordinary practical understanding of mankind the difference is hardly visible. They were both what is roughly called Deists, and Deists of a school rather negative than positive, *i.e.*, habitually more given to denying immortality, revelation, &c.,

than to asserting the existence of God. In modern phraseology I suppose Frederick would be called a 'Deist' but not a 'Theist.'

I believe it would not be difficult to show that the process, by which his views or beliefs concerning things spiritual or supernatural passed into the shape which they thenceforward kept, was to all intents and purposes completed during the earlier half, or rather during the first quarter, *i.e.*, the first year, of his residence at Rheinsberg. The Letters of his French correspondent asserted their great power not merely by modifying his opinions but much more by changing the whole habit of his thought;—by shifting for him promptly and permanently the centre-point of interest. Indeed the best of all reasons for keeping aloof from the metaphysical element in these letters, is that the writers themselves—Voltaire from the beginning, though he did not say so, and ere long Frederick too—were frightfully bored with it, and, after discoursing on 'l'être simple de Monsieur Wolff,' for a few pages, were always glad to turn to more pleasing topics. The letters ran much on literature, chiefly French literature, on Voltaire's tragedies and Frederick's odes, on poetry in general, and verse-making in particular. The questions of the day had their turn; so had, one may say, all great questions of all days, historical, political, social, and ecclesiastical. Even the natural sciences came in now and then. The correspondence, above all in

its earlier stages, is not what is now-a-days called 'interesting.' Very few persons would choose it for their 'reading;' few would care even to have a *résumé* of it. In after years it gained much by becoming more off-hand and less ambitious, when each of the writers had come to know and measure both himself and his opponent better. At first they were hampered by their awe of one another. Frederick wrote in something like the style of a schoolboy to a sage seated on the very heights of a well-earned and unapproachable immortality. But even Voltaire's letters are dull. They are not to be compared with the letters he could write to other people, or even with those he wrote to the King in after years. He was used to high society, and was fond of being thought to know a good deal about it; but still a Crown Prince did not come every day even in *his* way, and we may be allowed to suppose that the rank and prospects of his unseen correspondent hindered the freedom of his movements. He betakes himself to generalities and commonplaces, or notes each word that falls from the Prince's lips, is struck with it, re-echoes it, makes *scholia* upon it, and then finishes off after all with some plain, solid, fulsome flattery.

Frederick did not think the letters dull, either then or afterwards. He writes:—

'Remusberg, December 6th, 1737. . . . Just now I am on the look-out for letters from you. I hold out

hopes to myself every post-day.* Before the hour my servants are all despatched for the packet. By-and-by, impatience gets the better of me. I run to the window, and then, provoked at seeing nothing, go back to my occupations again. If I hear a noise in the ante-chamber, *me voilà!* Well, what is it? Give me my letters. No word of them yet? When this has gone on for some hours, behold the letters, and me breaking the seals! I look for your writing (often in vain), and when I catch sight of it, my hurry prevents me from opening the seal. I read, but so rapidly that I am obliged to read over again, perhaps three times, before my mind becomes sufficiently calm to let me understand the meaning; and it even happens that I do not succeed in that till the next day.' . . .

And again, in reply to some entreaties for re-doubled secresy—

'(September 14th, 1738). . . . When I receive any of your newest works, I read them in the presence of M. Keyserlingk and M. Jordan, after which I commit them to memory, and retain them like the works of Moses which the Kings of Israel were obliged to get by heart. The writings are then locked up in the inner cabinet of my archives, whence I take them only to read them myself. Your letters are treated in the same way; and though it is suspected that we correspond, nobody knows positively anything about it. I do not stop short here in my precautions. I have made further provision. My servants have orders to burn a certain parcel in case of my being in extreme danger. My life has been one tissue of mortifications, and the school of adversity makes a man circumspect, discreet, and compassionate.' †

* The post came and went twice in the week.

† *Œuvres, &c.*, tome xxi., pp. 121, 234, &c.

Indeed, unless it was Frederick's boundless admiration for Voltaire, nothing could go beyond his carefulness for his comfort, and his dread of being the cause of annoyance to him or the divine *Émilie.* He was sure that Voltaire's 'generous disposition' and 'love of the human race,' were the causes of the troubles and persecutions that he underwent. He longed to be able to offer him an asylum where there would be 'neither envious nor ungrateful persons, nor calumniators.' Before all was done he saw reason for changing his mind about the *caractère,* and made no secret of what he thought even to Voltaire himself, but he never faltered in his loyalty to the supreme intellect. After he had come to look down on the Man as almost despicable, he still looked up to the Thinker as the best and greatest.* His expressions in these early years and those in the last half of his life, are wonderfully like each other. For instance :—

(February, 1737) '. . . . If ever I go to France, the first thing that I shall ask will be, "Where is M. de Voltaire?" King, court, Paris, Versailles, the sex, amusements, will have no part in my journey.' (May). '. . . I reckon you at the head of all thinking beings.' (September) '. . . Nature, by dint of practice, becomes

* As Strauss has said, this theory of the King's, by which he stuck fast, does not quite meet the facts of the case. (Strauss, *Voltaire,* p. 345.) But his Majesty was satisfied with it, and often enough gave utterance to it, at first in a tone of wonder and disappointment.

more dexterous. She has modelled your brain on all the good originals that she has made in all ages.' (August, 1738) '. . . . No! There can be but one God and one Voltaire in Nature.'

More than twenty years afterwards (July, 1759), he writes:—

'I know well that I idolized you as long as I did not think you either mischievous or wicked; but you have played me so many sorts of tricks.—We will not say anything more about that; I have forgiven you all from a Christian heart. After all, you have done me more pleasure than harm. I enjoy your works more than I feel your scratches. If you had no faults you would dwarf the human race too much, and the universe would have reason to be jealous and envious of your advantages. Now one can say, Voltaire is the finest genius of all the ages; but I am at least more gentle, more tranquil, more sociable than he.'

A year later (June, 1760), he says:—

'I esteem in you the finest genius that the ages have borne. . . . You are charming in conversation . . . You are the most seductive creature I know.'

And in April, 1772:—

'As for me, I have done you justice for thirty-six years. I do not vary in my sentiments. At the age of sixty, I think of you just what I thought at four-and-twenty, and I pay my vows to that Being that animates all things, that He would deign to preserve the old sheath (*étui*) of your fine soul as long as possible.'

And in February, 1775:—

'. . . . You are immortal; I agree to that—I, who have no great belief in a Being called *soul*, distinct from the body. You will force me to believe in it; at all events you will be the only one of thinking beings who will have preserved to the age of eighty that strength, that vigour of mind, that *enjouement*, and those graces which breathe in your works, and there only.'

Some months later (September, 1775):—

'. . . . You want to know what we were conversing about on the road to Silesia. Well, then! be informed that you recited *Mérope* and *Mahomet* to me, and that, when the carriage jolted too violently, I got by heart the passages which had struck me the most. Thus I filled up my time whilst travelling, crying out ever and anon, "Blessings on the delightful genius who, present or absent, always gives me a like pleasure!" I have read your works through again and again long ago.'*

In September, 1737, he writes:—

'. . . . Your works shall be kept as those of Aristotle were by Alexander. They shall never leave me, and I count on having a complete library in them.'

And just forty years afterwards, in November, 1777, he says:—

'. . . . Bitaubé has told you true; I have built a public library in Berlin. The works of Voltaire were too

* *Œuvres, &c.*, xxi., 36, 60, 93, 222; xxiii., 56, 87, 215, 315, 354.

shabbily lodged. Alexander the Great, indeed, placed the works of Homer in the most precious chest that he had found amongst the spoils of Darius. As for me, who am neither Alexander, nor Great, nor have despoiled anybody, I have to the extent of my small capacity constructed the handsomest case possible, in which to place the works of the Homer of our day.' *

The Prince's earliest present to the Poet was a walking stick, having a handle made of a head of Socrates in gold. It was sent, seemingly without the right address, by the post to Paris, and in some way intrusted to the care of the Prussian ambassador there. Notice of the coming present had been given to Voltaire, but, he having in the meanwhile gone off on one of his many journeys to Holland, the letter had not come to hand. A whole series of mistakes ensued. The ambassador, perhaps partly misinformed, partly misled by the shape of the parcel—the stick being well rolled up in sheets of paper—took it for a likeness of the Prince and, thinking it improper that a portrait of the Crown Prince of Prussia should lie at the Post-office, caused it to be fetched to his house. Then finding out that the parcel was designed to go to Cirey, he

* *Œuvres, &c.*, xxi., 89 ; xxiii., 412. His Majesty's architectural masterpiece, the Royal Library in Berlin, built to look as like as 'possible' to a cupboard of that time, and marked with the classical (?) sign 'Nutrimentum Spiritus,' having stood during a century, and being no longer able to hold the books that have been written by Voltaire's successors, is to be pulled down one of these days.

sent word to the inhabitants of that charming region of the treasure that was at their disposal. Voltaire was not at home, but the *marquise* du Châtelet, having first written to forewarn him that the image of certain god-like features would be awaiting his return, sent a letter to Paris applying to the ambassador for the parcel. After some ado she got it. Voltaire, in the meanwhile, on receipt of her letter to him, had at once written to the Prince to thank him loud and long for his most gracious gift. This picture should henceforth be the one ornament of Cirey, and underneath it mankind would read the inscription, *Vultus Augusti, Mens Trajani.* The writer had doubts only whether the painter would have been able to give expression to the features of that exquisite soul to which he had consecrated his homage. Frederick replied, of course, that he had never thought of sending his picture. In the meanwhile, however, later tidings had come from Cirey; the parcel had arrived there, and Madame *la marquise* was 'in despair at its being only Socrates.'* Her despair,

* The stick had been intended for Manteuffel; his insincerities coming to light, its destination was changed. Of course it was not necessary to say so to Voltaire. Unfortunately Manteuffel had known of the coming present, and he must have been much disappointed. Seckendorff writes:—'Junior [Frederick] has shown the *Diable* a present which he destines for him. It is a gold knob for a stick, which he has had made on purpose. It represents the head of Socrates, and there are some French verses engraved below, which Junior wrote himself. The design is most flattering for the *Diable*, Junior representing

sent in hot haste to Holland and there shared, aggravated, deepened, eventually doubled or tripled and thrown into a lyrical shape, was then, with some praise of Frederick at the expense of Socrates, forwarded to Rheinsberg, where ere long it did prove father to the gift of the likeness in question. Frederick, with his usual promptitude, resolved that Knobelsdorff, who had just then come back from Italy, should paint him, and that Keyserlingk, the most confidential of his friends and the best talker of them all, should carry the picture to Cirey, and do one or two other little commissions there at the same time. Frederick had a mighty longing after a sight of some of Voltaire's unpublished writings.

In April, 1737, he writes :—

'It appears that you wish to have my portrait; you desire it, I have ordered it at once. To show you to what a degree the arts are held in honour by us, learn, sir, that there is no science that we do not try to ennoble. One of my gentlemen, named Knobelsdorff, whose talents are not confined to the brush, is doing the portrait. He knows that he is working for you, and that you are a connoisseur; and that is an *aiguillon* to urge him on to outdo himself. One of my intimate friends, the Baron Keyserlingk or Cæsarion, will deliver the effigy to you. He will be at Cirey about the end of next month. When you see him you will judge whether he does not deserve the esteem of every honourable man. I beg you, sir, to

himself in the verses as Alcibiades and the *Diable* as Socrates.' (How seldom it happens that an article *travaillé exprès* to fit some one, can be made to fit so admirably some one else !)

confide in him. He is charged to press you hard on the subject of the *Pucelle*, the Philosophy of Newton, the History of Louis XIV., and everything he can extort from you.'

Some weeks later he says :—

'Cæsarion has the misfortune of having been born in Courland, but he is the Plutarch of this modern Bœotia. Confide in him entirely. He has the rare merit of being *homme d'esprit* and prudent at the same time. . . . . If I were envious, it would be of his journey. The only thing that can console me is the idea of seeing him return like the leader of the Argonauts, who carried off the treasures of Colchos. . . . I hope my little ambassador will come back charged with the golden fleece.'*

The picture was finished on the 9th of May, and Keyserlingk was to be despatched with it forthwith. On which word was sent back from Cirey of great excitement there prevailing; the *marquise* especially could hardly control her impatience. The distinction of being about to receive the visit of one whom the greatest of Princes called his Friend! In Voltaire's next letter six paragraphs were written on the subject of Royal Friendships, the writer being glad to find that he had been right in always thinking, contrary to the opinion of most persons, not only that such a thing was possible, but that if ever it should exist it would be far purer and finer than ordinary friendship. This spectacle also it had

* *Œuvres, &c.*, xxi., 50, &c. 65.

been reserved for the most glorious of Princes to show to a delighted earth. And then the treasure that he was going to bring with him! 'Your Royal Highness may be persuaded that there will never be another portrait at Cirey than your own. There is a little figure of Cupid here, at the foot of which we have put *Noto Deo*. At the bottom of your picture we shall put *Soli Principi*.'

Keyserlingk was detained from week to week, but at last, about the beginning of July, he started, filled, one hopes, with the feelings that the following farewell address was calculated to awaken in him:—

'In taking leave of my little friend,' the Prince writes, 'I said to him—Remember that you are going to the Earthly Paradise; to a place a thousand times more delicious than the island of Calypso; that the goddess of those regions is not a whit inferior in beauty to the enchantress of Telemachus; that you will find in her all those *agrémens de l'esprit* which are so much to be preferred to those of the body; and that this wonder occupies her leisure with the research of truth. It is there that you will see the human mind in its highest perfection, wisdom without austerity, surrounded by *des tendres Amours et des Ris*. You will there see on the one hand the sublime Voltaire, and on the other the amiable author of the *Mondain*. In what manner, my dear Cæsarion, shall any one be able to make you abandon a sojourn so full of attractions? How feeble are the bonds of friendship against so many charms!'*

* *Œuvres, &c.*, xxi., 68, 74, &c.

This letter is dated July 6th, and in the same month we find Keyserlingk at Cirey, where his presence, the gifts he has brought, and above all his conversation on his Master's 'divine character,' are throwing everybody into a succession of transports.

'He came only to be missed . . . . he leaves at Cirey an eternal *souvenir* of himself and the reign of Frederick established. . . . . I have just finished a conversation with M. de Keyserlingk,' Voltaire goes on, 'he has kindled yet more my zeal and admiration for your person. All my misfortune is having health that will probably prevent me from being the witness of the good which you will do to mankind, and of the great example which you will set. Happy they who shall see those *beaux jours !*'

And after Keyserlingk was gone :—

'You communicate with the faithful by the ministry of angels. You sent us the angel Cæsarion, and he has returned to his heaven too soon. We have seen you in your ambassador. To see you face to face is a blessing not bestowed on us. . . . . We have just been performing some of your music. Your portrait was above the *clavecin*. . . . . Adorable Prince! my health is always languishing, but if I desire to live it is to be a witness of that which you will do.' *

Keyserlingk's report of Cirey is not forthcoming, but from Rheinsberg we have the reflection of his letters. After a stay of some weeks, he set forth on

* *Œuvres, &c.*, xxi., 80, 82, 93, 94, 95.

his way homewards, carrying certain fragments of the 'golden fleece.' Voltaire was by no means to be persuaded to part with some of the more venturesome of his writings, such for instance as the Maid of Orleans. They were in the hands of the *marquise*, who would not give them up! She was afraid of accidents to the angel, who might be searched at the frontier.

'The friendship with which she honours me,' says Voltaire, 'will not permit her to hasard a thing which might separate me from her for ever. . . . . she knows that the slightest knowledge had of this work would certainly raise a storm. . . . . She knows that your Royal Highness would not wish to risk the happiness of your two subjects at Cirey for a *plaisanterie en vers*.'

Frederick, though disappointed, received the excuses perfectly *en grand seigneur*, without a word of irritation, whilst he must have felt that mistrust in himself had had a good deal to do with the clipping down of the *toison d'or*.

'I expected,' he says, 'to reap an abundant harvest in your *Métaphysique;* Madame du Châtelet takes it back after it was in my friend's hands! What a subject for an elegy! However, you must not expect any reproaches. I only beg you to say to the divine *Émilie* that my spirit wails from the midst of the darkness which she prevents you from dispelling. . . . . Do not fear, sir, that I shall disturb the sweets of your philosophic repose. If my hands could cement or strengthen the bonds of your divine union, I would gladly offer you their services.

I have made trial of a sort of shipwreck in my own life; Heaven preserve me from being the occasion of the same to others!'*

Keyserlingk lingered long on the road home, knocked up by gout, and did not reach Rheinsberg again till March, 1738.

From time to time many other little presents were sent after the stick, some of them for the *marquise*. As everybody knows, Voltaire all his life long was always 'dying'; and in those early days Frederick took the alarms *au pied de la lettre*. 'Do *not*,' he once wrote, 'frighten me so about your health. . . . . Your fever keeps me in great anxiety. . . . I fear to lose the Master who instructs and guides me,' &c., &c. He consulted the doctors in Berlin on his account, and sent him drugs and pills and prescriptions and, better still, now and then some Hungarian wine. A parcel that went from Rheinsberg in November, 1739, contained 'five chapters of the *Antimachiavel*, the plan of Rheinsberg, and some powders, admirable for colics.' Voltaire had no words to thank 'the god of medicine and verse in one—nay, Bacchus too,' but added plaintively:—'It is long since I made up my mind that my malady, if I may compare evil with good, is like my attachment to your person, a thing for life.' Once at least, many years later, we find him asking for more pills. It was a

* *Œuvres, &c.*, xxi., 80, 81, 90, 91.

very delicate and flattering compliment to pay Frederick, who loved to dabble in medicine whilst he laughed at the doctors and those who trusted them. In the end, though as loth to lose Voltaire as ever, he got better used to the notices of 'dying,' and took them easy. He maintained, and perhaps had reasoned himself into the belief, that the Patriarch of Ferney would live to be as old as Fontenelle.

By little and little Frederick, timidly at first and, as it were, accidentally, by dropping a few lines at the head of a letter, began to send Voltaire verses of his own. Meeting with encouragement he sent more, along with assurances of his great bashfulness, and ere long whole packages of Odes were forwarded from Rheinsberg to Cirey. Voltaire, very much surprised, broke forth, of course, into loud praises, which were partly sincere; he had not expected verses, either good or bad, from 'the depths of Germany,' written by a young man who had never seen France. To Frederick the praise was very dear, though he had his misgivings that it savoured of irony. In after years he was certainly honester in disowning all high thoughts of his own gift of rhyme. At this period his heart and hopes were set, it may be, more firmly on poetry than on anything else, and his mind was open to the delightful conviction that he might really turn out to be a French Apollo born in Brandenburg. Though he could not spell, he took no end of trouble to

learn the rules of metre, and he was very much in earnest in wishing for Voltaire's teaching and—approval.

'There is a deal of temerity,' he says (January, 1737), 'in a scholar, or rather, to speak more correctly, a frog, of the sacred valley, to dare to croak in the presence of Apollo.'

In August of the same year, sending an Ode, he says:—

'If it is not making an abuse of your precious moments, might I ask you to correct it? I have the misfortune of being fond of verses, and of making often very bad ones. . . . . An amiable person* in the flower of my young years inspired me with two passions at once. You will guess that the one was love and the other poetry. . . . . Since that time I have been pretty often in love, and each time a poet.' And in November:—'I have little merit and little learning, but I have a very willing mind, and an inexhaustible fund of esteem and friendship for persons of distinguished virtue, and along with that I am capable of all the constancy that true friendship exacts. I have judgment enough to render to you all the justice which you deserve, but not enough to prevent me from making bad verses. . . . . If it were not abusing your friendship and robbing you of those moments which you employ so usefully for the public good, might I ask you to give me some rules for distinguishing the words which are suitable for verse

* Frederick's verses to Madame de Wreech and hers in reply, written in 1731, are printed in the *Œuvres de Frédéric*, tome xvi., pp. 12, 13, &c.

from those which are proper to prose? Despréaux does not touch upon this point in his *Art Poétique.*' (December):—'. . . . You will have received by this time a good quantity of my verses, which I sent off to Cirey about the end of November. I am passionately fond of poetry, but there are too many obstacles in my way. I am a foreigner; my imagination is not lively enough; and all the good things have been said before.' (March, 1740):—'. . . . Habit has turned the aptitude that I had for the arts into temperament. When I can neither read nor work, I am like people who take snuff, and who are ready to die of uneasiness and are always putting their hands in their pockets if their snuff-box has been taken from them.'*

In general Voltaire responds with mere praise:—'You write at Berlin such verses as those that were written at Versailles in the times of good taste.' But after a while, being often asked, he now and then offers the choice of another spelling or a different number of feet, as,—

(January, 1738.) '. . . . There are but a few mistakes which have escaped the writer's vivacity, faults of the fingers and not of the mind. . . . . Your rapid hand has set down *j'ause* for *j'ose*, and *tres* for *traits*. You make *amitié* of four syllables, the word has but three; you give three to *carrière*, and it has but two. These are such remarks as the porter of the French Academy would make. . . . . I fasten one of your shoe-buckles, whilst the Graces hand you your shirt and attire you.' (January, 1739.) '. . . . As regards verses, I defy the

* *Œuvres, &c.*, xxi., 32, 86, 118, 132, 360.

whole of Germany and nearly the whole of France to produce anything better than this fine *Épître* [to Prince August William]:—

> O vous en qui mon cœur, tendre et plein de retour,
> Chérit encor le sang qui lui donna le jour!

This *encor* strikes me as one of the most delicate touches of art and of language; it is saying very energetically in two syllables that one loves one's parents a second time in one's brother [!!!]. But if it please your Royal Highness, do not write *opinion* any more with a *g* [opingon], and deign to restore to that word the four syllables of which it is composed. These are the occasions on which great princes and great geniuses must yield to pedants. All the grandeur of your genius has no influence on syllables, and it is not in your power to put a *g* where there is none. Whilst I am on syllables I will further supplicate your Royal Highness to spell *vice* with a *c*, and not with two *ss*. By attending to these little things you will be of the *Académie Française* when you please.' (April, 1739.) '. . . . Your French style has attained to such a point of exactitude and elegance, that I imagine that you were born at Versailles in the time of Louis XIV., that Bossuet and Fénelon were your schoolmasters, and Madame de Sévigné your nurse. If you wish, however, to comply with our wretched rules of versification, I shall have the honour of telling your Royal Highness that our timid writers avoid as far as possible making use of the word *croient* in poetry. . . . . Thus, instead of saying,

> Ils croient réformer, stupides téméraires,

the Apollos of Rheinsberg will say quite as well,

> Ils pensent réformer, stupides téméraires.'*

* *Œuvres, &c.*, xxi., 135, 250, &c., 281.

Voltaire was far from not meaning anything of what he said. Ten years afterwards, we hear of his receiving and reading a fresh Ode, 'with an air of pity,' and still later his unlucky speech about 'the King's dirty linen that was sent to him to wash,' brought him into trouble. But at this early stage he was still much struck with this young Prince's love of letters, and, whether he saw or surmised poetic talent in the background or not, he thought on every ground that the learning should be encouraged. He wrote to Hénault :—

'It is a miracle in nature that the son of a crowned ogre (*un ogre couronné*), brought up amongst savages, should in those wildernesses have hit upon (*deviné*) all that refinement and all those natural graces which in Paris are distributed amongst but a small number of persons, and which nevertheless give Paris its reputation.'

There was nothing in the universe that could have gladdened his heart more in those sad times than to see a true son of Apollo crowned and seated on a European throne. To Frederick he looked for the reign of a King who would hate the din of battles, and leave treaties and inheritances and grasping neighbours to shift for themselves; one who would not only surround himself with philosophers and poets and other enlightened persons, but would make it his chief concern to shed the blessings of light upon all men—perhaps to knock it into them with the stick when they liked dark-

ness better, much as Joseph II. afterwards tried to do. To help in bringing about an end so greatly to be desired, he was very glad to teach Frederick spelling, and even prosody. When, in course of time, it turned out that the pupil knew a good many things which he certainly had not learned from that master, Voltaire was not unnaturally a little bewildered. At first he had no faith at all in the new King's new ways, and made no great secret of his misliking for them. Soon after some of the earlier Silesian victories, the Margravine of Bayreuth sends word that she has had a letter from Voltaire, beginning,—

'Sœur d'Apollon devenu Mars,'

and it strikes her that he is 'fort estomaqué' at the transformation. In the long run he did grudgingly acknowledge in Frederick forces and properties in which he for one had had no part.

Frederick himself in the first years of his reign and battles, at the time when his aim was still *la gloire*, always talked, not only to Voltaire but to others, of the battles as a sort of lucky chance, something thrown in the way for a poet-King to snatch up in passing. 'Would anybody have supposed,' he writes in February, 1742, 'that a nursling of the Muses, along with a dozen grave fools who are called politicians, should have been destined to set in motion the big wheel of European events?' And a month later: 'Have a little love, I pray you,

for this fugitive from Apollo who has enrolled himself under Bellona.'

Perhaps in the course of time, 'the big wheel of European events' claiming very constant attention, the management of it was such hard, unremitting work that the composition of Odes and Epistles, instead of being a serious employment, became a light diversion. Outwardly, to the eye of a careless observer, there might have seemed to be little change. For 'ever and anon through his life,' as Mr. Carlyle has said, 'on small hint from without or on great, there was found a certain leakage of verses, which he was prompt to utter.' And these verses, often in great numbers, not always, but usually and very fondly, were sent to Voltaire as of old. For some years at first there would seem to have been a pause, for in 1749 his Majesty writes from Potsdam:—

'Acknowledge that you thought that huge consignment of verses very ridiculous. . . . . I had hoped you would have criticized my pieces of poetry as you used to do when I was an inhabitant of Remusberg, and poor Keyserlingk, for whom I sorrow and always shall sorrow, was your admirer. But Voltaire, turned courtier, yields nothing but commendation, which I admit to be a less dangerous *métier*.'

Afterwards, when Voltaire had come to Potsdam, the former *métier* was taken in hand again, and 'the King's dirty linen' was washed painstakingly. And for long years after that, till far on in old age,

the 'consignments' were forwarded to Ferney as once they had gone to Cirey.

I suppose the happiest hours of King Frederick's life were those he spent in writing poetry, *i.e.*, in measuring feet and finding French rhymes, and fastening these to thoughts that at no time were very striking and now are nearly all of them strikingly commonplace. Next to these came, doubtless, the hours he spent in fluting. Neither the thoughts nor the rhymes nor the feet cost him a great deal of trouble; they all came to hand readily enough, and the readiness itself, particularly in the poet's younger years, may have been taken for the creative afflatus or a hopeful symptom and sign of it. The very ease with which he wrote was perhaps one reason why he was so desirous of correction; till far on in life he was as keenly bent on improving his style as any youngster at college who ought to be grinding for his little go, and instead of that is dreaming of literary fame. In the very letter I have just quoted from, of February, 1749—after he had been a King during nine years and had brought two wars to a glorious ending—he goes on: 'Do you not think that writing good verses is a step towards writing good prose? Will the style not become more energetical, particularly if we take care not to overload our prose with epithets, amplifications, and turns too strictly poetical?' As old age drew near it is likely he did not overrate his 'pieces' very greatly. He knew better then what

they were worth, but his delight in them did not grow less. In November, 1769, he writes:—

'I send you a *Prologue de Comédie*, which I composed to entertain the Electress of Saxony. . . . . You see, I have preserved my old weaknesses. I am madly fond of literature (*j'aime les belles lettres à la folie*); it is that alone which charms our leisure, and supplies us with true enjoyments. I should be just as fond of philosophy, if our feeble reason could discover in it the truths that are hidden from our eyes.'

Two months later he says:—

'*Tenez, voyez-vous, mon cher*, each man is born with some talent or other. On you Nature bestowed them all; the worthy mother has not been so generous to everybody. You compose your works for glory, and I mine for my amusement. We both attain our point, but the manner is very different; for as long as the sun shines on the earth, as long as there is a tinge of learning, a spark of taste, as long as there are minds that love sublime thoughts, as long as there are ears sensitive to harmony, your works will endure and your name will fill the space of the ages that lead to eternity. As for mine, people will say, "It is something that that King was not quite imbecile; that is passable. If he had been born a private person, he would have been able to gain his livelihood by setting up as corrector of the press to some bookseller." And then they throw the book down; and then they make curl papers of it; and then nothing more is said about it.' *

In this the King foresaw aright; his *Poésies*

* *Œuvres, &c.*, xxiii. 146.

have not gained the ear of posterity. They served their generation when they gave pleasure to their author by coming into being, and then they fell on sleep. As poems they are not good but bad. It is of no use to say that there are exceptions amongst them. Of course there are exceptions, but the monstrous rule is that everything is awanting to them but commonplace. The sentiments, no doubt, were often real enough—such sentiments as (what might have been so interesting to ourselves) the writer's delight in the tranquillity granted him in those years of cheerful seclusion—but the expression of it is inexhaustibly *fade.** The result is a horrible choking monotony. Anyone who has thought it his business to read them through, will have felt, on getting to the end, pretty much as if he had been set to munch the thick paper on which they are printed.

I have myself held in my hand the King's own manuscript of the *Pièces Diverses*, the *Épîtres familières*, &c., as transcribed by him for the edition of 1750, *au donjon du château.* (They are now to be found in Tomes X. and XI. of the *Œuvres de Frédéric.*) The manuscript is in the private library of the German Emperor. It is from beginning to end in Frederick's small, rather cramped, but dainty hand, and is written with no end of pains,

* The titles are sometimes as promising as possible. There is for instance a poem (written at Rheinsberg in 1737) called 'Parallèle de la Liberté et des Agrémens que je goute ici dans ma retraite avec la vie pleine de trouble et d'agitation que mènent les Courtisans.'

or, as people say now-a-days, with 'love.' It was certainly a labour of love. It contains many of the 'pieces' made at Rheinsberg. These, sent to Voltaire and shown to other admiring friends at the time when they were written, long ago criticized, corrected, and put aside, he, in the winter of 1749–50, took out again, and, having put them through a fresh process of revisal, with his own hand he made this clean copy of them and of a number of other later productions, with the view of printing them. Underneath several of them he has written both dates, as thus, at the bottom of the stanzas on Tranquillity :—

'*Faites*, 1736. *Corrigées à Potsdam*, 1750.'*

In those first years of their intercourse one need not doubt that Voltaire not only admired Frederick, but had also a real regard and liking for him—a regard and liking grounded partly on the relation of master toward a gifted pupil, and not yet endangered by signs of independence in the pupil. Once he says:—

'Are you aware, *monseigneur*, that you are adored in France? . . . . Once more, it is a great pity for us that you were born to reign elsewhere. A million at least of revenue, a fine palace in a temperate climate, friends instead of subjects, to live in the midst of Arts and Pleasures, to owe the respect and admiration of

* Formey, with much truth and with an appearance of humour most unusual in him, remarks in one place that though the King professed to be convinced that his Poetry would not go down to posterity, 'he did nothing to prevent it.'

mankind to yourself alone,—perhaps that might be as good as a kingdom. But your duty is to make the Prussians happy. Oh, how they are envied!'

To which Frederick makes reply:—

'I should like much to be able to live in a temperate climate. I should like much to deserve having such friends as yourself, and being esteemed by persons of worth. I would willingly give up all claim to that which forms the principal object of men's desires and ambition. But I feel too well assured that if I were not a Prince I should be *bien peu de chose*. Your merit suffices to make you esteemed, to make you envied, to attract admiration. As for me, I must have titles, armour-bearings, and revenues, to draw the regards of mankind upon me. Oh, my dear friend, what good reason you have to be content with your lot!'*

It is to be owned that Voltaire's expressions are often high-flown. He is Frederick's 'subject,' of course. Frederick is his 'Own Prince,' his 'King,' his 'Adorable Sovereign,' and 'Monarch,' and 'Only Master.' Madame *la marquise* du Châtelet uses nearly the same expressions. Neither he nor she ever passes in front of 'The Portrait' without intoning their hymn which begins, 'Espérons le bonheur du monde!' Cirey is Frederick's Cirey. It belongs to him. Cirey is a little Paradise to which Rheinsberg is the Empyrean. Or rather, Cirey is a portion of Rheinsberg, but has somehow been detached from it. Its allegiance is still given

* *Œuvres, &c.*, xxi., 123, 149.

wholly to the parent soil; other allegiance it will never know. The souls and hearts of its inhabitants are at Remusberg, at the foot of that holy mountain on whose summit their hero is set.* Having come home once from Holland, Voltaire gives notice: 'I have to inform you, *rex amate*, that I have returned to your little province of Cirey.' On another occasion, recognising the laws of geography, he says: 'Amongst my complaints against Providence there will be a heavy one of the extreme injustice of not having put Cirey in Prussia.' Further on he picks up hope: 'We were made to be your subjects. I am persuaded that if you looked well into your titles you would see that the marquisate of Cirey is an ancient dependency of Brandenburg. That is more certain than the foundation of Remusberg by Remus.' And in 1738, Frederick having dropped something about the chance of his having to fight the French on a future day, Voltaire rises to the following adjuration:—

'I beg the grace of your Royal Highness, that one of

* Le ciel au haut du mont Rémus
A placé mon héros, l'exemple des vrais sages;
Il commande aux esprits, il est roi sans pouvoir.
Au pied du mont Rémus finissez vos voyages;
L'univers n'est plus rien, vous n'avez rien à voir.
Ciel! quand arriverai-je à la montagne auguste
Où règne un philosophe, un bel esprit, un juste,
Un monarque fait homme, un dieu selon mon cœur, &c.,

From a letter of Voltaire's to Frederick of November, 1739. The verses are supposed to be addressed to Lord Baltimore.

the first expeditions of your campaigns will be to come and reconquer Cirey, which has been most unjustly detached from Remusberg, to which it by right belongs. But at the peace do not give back Cirey, I conjure you, *monseigneur*. Give back, if it so please you, Strasburg and Metz, but keep your Cirey; and above all, do not allow the guns to injure the gilded and polished *lambris*, or Émilie's niches and *entre-sols*.'

Frederick answers in the same tone; sometimes he gives the tone. He says that Remusberg is a little Cirey—a Cirey minus Voltaire and Madame du Châtelet; but that since the Apollo of Cirey has begun to shine upon its atoms, these have all been quickened to cultivate the arts and sciences.

'We want nothing at Remusberg,' he says, 'but a Voltaire. But your person is, so to speak, innate in our souls. You are ever with us. Your portrait presides in my library; it hangs above the shelves which contain the Golden Fleece, just above your works and over against the place where I sit, so that it is always before my eyes. I had almost said that this portrait is like the statue of Memnon, which gave forth a harmonious sound when struck by the rays of the sun;—that your features, in like manner, animate the minds of those who look upon them.'*

When he is going to Cleves with his father, where he will be so near the French frontier, he says he will turn his face 'towards Cirey, as the

* *Œuvres, &c.*, xxi., 43, 47, 113, 204, 241.

captive Jews in Babylon turned their faces toward the Temple when they prayed.' But he will not come to Cirey to lay siege to it; adds, however, not quite consistently :—

'A modern Jason, I should carry off the Golden Fleece, but at the same time the dragon who guards the treasure; *gare, madame la marquise !*'

A year later his impatience gets the upper hand :

'It shall not be said that I died without having seen you. If I should have to carry you off, I shall try the adventure. Acknowledge that you would be very much surprised if there were to arrive at Cirey some night people with masks, torches, a chaise, and all the apparatus of an elopement.' *

As long as King Frederick William lived, the Prince Royal could hardly hope even to see Voltaire, much less to receive a visit from him or to pay him one. But he certainly counted on seeing a good deal of him sometime, perhaps he had all along a faint hope of 'possessing' him sooner or later. In these letters he puts in words more than once his great desire of being surrounded by 'clever and learned' men, and then, as if afraid of being misunderstood, he begs his correspondent to be assured that nothing shall ever tempt him to trouble the relations or at all to vex the peace of Voltaire and

* *Œuvres, &c.*, xxi., 201, 223, 338.

the divine *Émilie.* He may have been quite sincere in saying so, and yet have harboured in his mind a hidden and unackowledged wish, the father to an unborn thought. Mixed up with the *badinage* about Emily's jealous greediness in monopolising the poet, there was a grain of real impatience, and the compliments that were heaped on her so very unsparingly were in part meant to keep her from knowing that she was becoming a bore.

Frederick and Emily wrote to each other now and then, not very heartily, but still without any very evident constraint. The one half of their correspondence turned on Voltaire, whom the *marquise* took in hand to defend at great length from his enemies and traducers—a defence not wanted at that time over against Frederick. The other half turned on science. At the very outset the lady sent the Prince her treatise 'Sur le Feu,' which he not only read and duly admired, but even, to show his deep interest in it, ventured to criticise in some points. Not directly, however. It was in his next letter to Voltaire that he hinted at his doubts as to certain statements—as he very politely put it, 'ce qui parait être échappé à la marquise'—on the subject of combustion caused in forests by the movement of branches. That was a natural phenomenon which he could in no wise bring himself to 'take in.' Whereupon, in her next, the *marquise* defended her view. It was but a theory, to be sure, but friction being the most powerful of

all agents in ignition, she did not see why a violent wind should not set the branches on fire by shaking them. No doubt it would have to be a very high wind, but 'avec un vent donné,' she thought it very possible. But Frederick was not to be convinced. Notwithstanding his politeness and his admiration, he still doubted.

'I can hardly persuade myself, Madame, that even *un vent donné* could cause a conflagration in a forest. I am in a country, Madame, in which, for my misfortune, it is more within my reach to make these observations. In the autumn and early spring we have winds which assuredly do justice to the impetuosity of Boreas, and it often happens that they tear up by the roots oaks which seem firmly fixed in the ground for ever, so strong and deep are their roots.'

But he thinks that they could not under any circumstances set the forests on fire, as the bark on the branches and the moss attached to it, 'ne s'y prêteraient pas facilement.'

The discussion was conducted gracefully for some months, till at last Voltaire, having been referred to, gave a verdict in Frederick's favour against *Émilie*. Withered branches, he said, would break in a high wind and fall, and green ones would not produce a spark for any wind in the world. 'Il faut,' he declared, 'que j'aime bien la vérité pour convenir qu' Émilie se trompe; mais cette vérité l'emporte sur les rois et même sur les Émilie.' Whereupon

the *marquise* formally retracted her theory. There were no *moyens* to maintain it, since his Royal Highness was against her, and M. de Voltaire had gone over to that side.

This was about the liveliest thing in the correspondence, which soon died a natural death after Frederick mounted the throne.

The following letter is the last one to Voltaire from Rheinsberg. It may serve as a very fair specimen of the correspondence. It is therefore given almost quite entire.

'REMUSBERG, *May* 18*th*, 1740.

'Je vois dans vos discours la puissante évidence,
Et, d'un autre côté, la brillante apparence ;
Par tous deux ébranlé, séduit également,
Je demeure indécis dans mon aveuglement.
L'homme est né pour agir, il est libre, il est maître ;
Mais ses sens limités ne sauraient tout connaître.
Ses organes grossiers confondent les objets ;
L'atome n'est point vu de ses yeux imparfaits,
Et les trop vastes corps à ses regards échappent ;
Les tubes vainement dans les cieux les rattrapent.
Pour tout connaître, enfin, nous ne sommes pas faits ;
Mais devinons toujours, et soyons satisfaits.

'That is all the verdict that I can deliver between the *marquise* and M. de Voltaire. When I read your *Métaphysique*, I cry out, I admire, and I believe. When I read the *Institutions Physiques* of the *marquise*, I feel myself shaken, and I know not whether I have been or am being deceived. In one word it would be necessary to have an intelligence as much superior to yours as you are superior to other thinking beings, to say which of you has found out the answer to the riddle. I humbly avow that I have a great respect for *la raison suffisante*,

but that I should think the application of it much more infallible if our knowledge were as extensive as it exacts. We have at best but a few notions of the attributes of matter and the laws of mechanism, but I make no doubt that the Eternal Architect has an infinite number of secrets which we shall never discover, and which consequently make the application of the *raison suffisante* in our hands inadequate. I own, on the other hand, that those *êtres simples* which think seem to me very metaphysical, and that I have no comprehension at all of Newton's *vacuum*, and very little of Leibnitz's space. It seems to me impossible for men to reason upon the attributes and actions of the Creator *sans dire des pauvretés*. I have no other idea of God than that of a Being sovereignly good.

'I do not know whether His liberty implies a contradiction to *la raison suffisante*, or whether laws co-eternal with His existence render His actions compulsory and subject to their determination; but I am very thoroughly convinced that everything in this world is quite right, and that if God had willed to make metaphysicians of us, He would assuredly have imputed to us intelligence and knowledge vastly superior to those we have.

'It is disagreeable for philosophers that they are obliged to give a reason for everything. They must needs have recourse to imagination when things palpable fail them. For all that I must tell you that I am greatly pleased with your *Traité de Métaphysique*. It is the Pitt diamond or the great Sancy, which contain immense treasures in small compass. The solidity of your reasoning and your moderation in giving your opinion might be an example to all who lay themselves out for the discussion of truth. The desire of information appears to be their natural object, but the pleasure of perplexing each other is too often the unfortunate result.

'I wish I were in the peaceful and tranquil situation you fancy me in. I assure you that philosophy seems to me more charming and attractive than the throne. It has the advantage of being a solid pleasure. It carries the day over the illusions and errors of mankind; and those who have it in their power to pursue it into the region of virtue and truth, are much to be condemned if they abandon it for that of vices and impostures.

Sorti du palais de Circé,
Loin des cris de la multitude,
Je me croyais débarrassé
Des périls au sein de l'étude;
Plus qu'alors je suis menacé
D'une triste vicissitude,
Et par le sort je suis forcé
D'abandonner ma solitude.

'Thus it is that in the world appearances are very deceptive. To tell you plainly how it stands, I must warn you that the language of the newspapers is more untruthful than ever, and that the love of life and hope are inseparable from human nature. These are the foundations of this so-called convalescence, of which I should be glad to see the reality. My dear Voltaire, the King's illness is a complication of disorders, the advance of which takes away every hope of cure; it consists of a dropsy and *une étisie formelle* throughout the whole body. The most distressing symptoms of the disease are frequent vomitings which weaken the patient greatly. He deceives himself and thinks to save himself by the efforts he makes to appear in public. That is what deceives those who are not informed of the true state of matters.

On n'a jamais ce qu'on désire;
Le sort combat notre bonheur;
L'ambitieux veut un empire,
L'amant veut posséder un cœur;

Un autre après l'argent soupire,
Un autre court après l'honneur.
Le philosophe se contente
Du repos, de la vérité ;
Mais dans cette si juste attente
Il est rarement contenté.
Aussi, dans le cours de ce monde,
Il faut souscrire à son destin ;
C'est sur la raison que se fonde
Notre bonheur le plus certain.
Ceint du laurier d'Horace, ou ceint du diadème,
Toujours d'un pas égal tu me verras marcher,
Sans me tourmenter ni chercher
Le repos souverain qu'au fond de mon cœur même.

'It is the only thing left for me to do, for I foresee too surely that it is no longer in my power to draw back. It is in grieving for the loss of my independence that I quit it, and in mourning for my happy obscurity that I am forced to take my place on the world's great theatre. . . .

'Tired of Mr. Pine's slowness, I have taken the resolution of having the Henriade printed here under my own eyes. I am getting the finest printing press with silver letters that is to be found in England. All our artists are at work on the plates and vignettes. . . . . I fear that you will think me to-day if not the most troublesome at least the most gossiping of princes. Lengthiness is one of the failings of my nation. . . . . Continue to love me a little, for I am jealous of your esteem.'*

The next day, May 19th, he wrote a very polite letter to Madame du Châtelet ; and I do not doubt but that the two were sent under one envelope. They were the last that went in that direction from Rheinsberg. The next to Voltaire is dated from

* *Œuvres, &c.*, xxi., 377, &c.

Charlottenburg, June 6th, and begins: 'My dear friend, my lot has changed, and I have looked on at the last moments of a King, at his agony, his death.' A second letter of June 12th begins with some verses which are so truthful in rendering the writer's thought that one is tempted to quote them too :—

'Non, ce n'est plus du mont Rémus,
Douce et studieuse retraite
D'où mes vers vous sont parvenus,
Que je date ces vers confus ;
Car, dans ce moment, le poëte
Et le prince sont confondus.
Désormais mon peuple que j'aime
Est l'unique dieu que je sers.
Adieu les vers et les concerts,
Tous les plaisirs, Voltaire même ;
Mon devoir est mon dieu suprême.
Qu'il entraîne de soins divers !
Quel fardeau que le diadème !
Quand ce dieu sera satisfait,
Alors, dans vos bras, cher Voltaire,
Je volerai, plus prompt qu'un trait,
Puiser, dans les leçons de mon ami sincère
Quel doit être d'un roi le sacré caractère.'

We are not going to look any deeper into the Rheinsberg Correspondences ; though we must never forget what a great part of the time they filled up that was spent at the golden table with the scarlet top in the gay little octagon Study. Then and afterwards Frederick's fertility and pleasure in writing letters were great indeed. Few readers now-a-days would of their own accord read through the

dozen big closely-printed volumes of the friendly correspondence,* or think it aught but a hard task if duty bade them so do. In the Rheinsberg period the letters were not even at their best. It was in after years, when his mind was strung to the uttermost by the full strain of kingship, and when leisure had fled for ever, that he could often put on paper simply and cheerfully what it is charming to read. In the letters of his younger years he aimed higher, but his arrows had too little wood for the feather, and fell short. The questions of religion and philosophy, handled at such length, are dead to us. Scintillations of *esprit* abound sure enough, but do not dazzle. The reader is constantly prepared for points which are afterwards withheld; instead of pricking himself on a branch of sweet-briar, he gets a mild push, which is not even a poke—least of all in the ribs or any ticklish place—with the blunt knob of a familiar silk umbrella. There is no overflow of fancy or fun or fresh perception. The

* Which does not include letters on affairs of government, military matters, &c., and only a tithe of the letters to his near relatives, to all of whom he seems to have written quite regularly (twice a week, I believe) as long as he lived. The King's Political Correspondence (*Politische Correspondenz Friedrichs des Grossen*) is now being edited under the auspices of the *Akademie der Wissenschaften*, and is to fill thirty large volumes. To a lover of history, the contents of the two that have already appeared are a hundred times more fascinating than all the miscellaneous correspondence in the *Œuvres* put together. In these dispatches it is often possible to look pretty deep into Frederick's real mind.

vagueness of narrative and the poverty of description are quite wonderful, and sorely trying to those who would have liked to know what was going on.

Had this sort of life gone on, as very well it might have done, for twenty or thirty years,—King Frederick William in 1736 was forty-eight years old—we have every reason to suppose that Frederick would have become a laborious and successful writer. Many other results would have followed, the most of which are quite beyond our reckoning. Instead of which the Tranquillity of Rheinsberg came to an end in less than four years. The lord of the manor was then called to other labours.

The hard reading and the eager writing in the octagon turret chamber, thus broken off and afterwards resumed in form though not in substance, in the letter but not in the spirit, turned out to have been what one may be allowed to call the polishing of the steel blade. The essays and odes, and even the letters, are not in themselves a lasting gain to literature. To the world at large they are not more interesting than the class essays and holiday musings of any other very promising student. The chamois leather and the patent paste or powder are not necessarily lovely to look at; when they have done their work it is generally best to stow them out of the way. But the work is splendidly done; the steel has taken a fine polish. The blade, hard, keen, and bright before, has been rubbed till the mere brightness has become something rare and beautiful.

The flash of it, at a hasty glance, is then the most striking thing about the weapon. Possibly the weapon, for a while at least, might have been just as serviceable as it was. But when the chance is given, it is surely always well to adorn to the uttermost any instrument with which hard work is to be done. It will then be worth while to take good care of the said instrument merely for the sake of its great beauty or costliness. The owner's or onlooker's eye will be gratified at the same time.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE PRINCE ROYAL LEAVES RHEINSBERG.

King Frederick William feels his end approaching—And threatens to cut off the head of the Duke of Holstein—The Household observe a decent decorum—The Princess is called at two in the morning—And takes a sedative powder—The Frau von Katsch proposes a toast—Bielfeld sheds tears.

It had become pretty plain to everybody that the winter of 1739–40 would be the last one spent at Rheinsberg on the old footing. A hungry Bielfeld, the newest hanger-on, smacked his lips to think that he had come in the very nick of time to pass into the Kingdom in the character of a tried retainer —luckiest of dogs. Retainers longer tried were also glad of the coming change; how could it be otherwise? But they, and still more the highest personages, observed a decent decorum. In the Prince himself, at the sight of his father's sufferings and near death, some old son-like feelings, long kept out of sight, came into play. The King died hard; resigned, but wondering at the length and soreness of the struggle. Throughout those winter months in Berlin, and spring weeks at Potsdam, the agony of the finest specimen of muscular Christianity

in the whole eighteenth century, was very heart-rending to bystanders.

As long as there could be any doubt about the upshot, it is not to be wondered at if his Majesty, not having found the terms of it hard, rather clung to life. He was not an old man, and desire in his case had not begun to fail. Very likely, having been so long used to see every one run, or, for that matter, fly, at his bidding, he may not have been quite sure how a Life to come, and the things that had been told him of its equalities, would suit him at first. At all events he was determined to make no needless changes in the present one. In other circles a great deal had been said and sung and painted about the Rising Sun (more than was quite in good taste, unless people were discontented with the light they had), and it is possible that some hint of these slightly disloyal allegorizings had reached the royal ear and caused it to tingle a little. If, in some moments of a grim humour, the Setting Sun had a good mind to submerge certain of his satellites in the ocean along with, or even before, himself, it was not nature that stayed his hand, but grace.

One evening in April, we are told, King Frederick William, feeling better than usual, caused the Generals and Colonels and other great personages to be summoned to the Palace, and determined once more to hold a *Tabagie*. The sight of the party, which was a large one, put his Majesty into capital spirits. He ordered pipes and tobacco to be handed

round, did not himself smoke, but took part in the conversation, and was in great good humour. All at once the Crown Prince walked in, straight from Ruppin. Disquieted by some report, he had come on to Berlin to inquire for his father. The *Tabagie* being an assembly from which ceremony was banished, it was a rule in it that no person should ever rise from his chair out of deference to a person of rank, were it even the King himself;—a rule which in the lapse of years ought to have become like a second nature to those concerned. But, on the present occasion, suddenly swayed by something deeper than second nature—all of one accord yielding to promptings that will assail even statesmen and generals—the whole *Tabagie* unluckily sprang to its feet and bowed to the Crown Prince. This was the miserable ending of the King's last attempt to enjoy himself. His good humour was turned into very great anger, to which he gave vent in loud words. He rated the Generals, said he saw they worshipped the Rising Sun—in which he may not have been altogether mistaken—and caused himself to be wheeled back to his own room. From thence orders were sent to the whole party to quit the Palace forthwith and never enter it more. Upon a representation of deep and humble sorrow, with entreaties for pardon, the orders were renewed, with the addition that if they did not go at once means would be found to make them go. After which there was no help for it but to obey. A

good many days passed before they were readmitted one by one to be scolded and forgiven. The Duke of Holstein Beck, who was one of the last to be received to this sort of mercy mixed with some judgment, was told that he was not to think because he was a prince that he had prerogatives before other people; he might be sure that his head would fly like anybody else's, 'if he went on worshipping the Rising Sun.' *

Soon afterwards the King, to breathe the spring air, removed to Potsdam, knowing that he would not return. The Crown Prince, who had been the unlucky occasion for the rub, went back to Rheinsberg, and stayed there during the weeks that followed. On the 26th of May, a courier was sent to him to say that the King had had such a bad night that his death could be feared any hour, and that it might be well if his Royal Highness would come, but without seeming to be aware of any particular danger. The next morning the Prince set out, attended by Jordan, Willich, and Buddenbrock. The touching meeting between his father and him, and the solemn death scene of the days that followed, the conversations on repentance, the farewells, the testamentary dispositions, and the sufferer's curiosity as the pins of his earthly tabernacle were being loosened, &c., &c., ought to be fresh in the memory of most readers, and cannot be described

* Pöllnitz. *Mémoires, &c.*, ii., 359–63.

here. Under Bielfeld's guidance we have to look in on a less affecting scene.

'Every one at Rheinsberg,' he says, 'waited with the utmost impatience for tidings from Potsdam, and whenever a horse or an ox came across the wooden bridge from the public road, all eyes were turned in that direction, and everybody ran to the window. The Princess Royal alone appeared tranquil; outwardly, at least, she observed a most becoming propriety.

'Five days elapsed in this uncertainty; they appeared to us insupportably long. More than once we thought that a modern Joshua had commanded the sun to stand still in heaven. On the evening of Friday, the 31st of May, the Princess was in her closet, playing with three of her ladies; two ladies, the Herr von Brand and I were playing at quadrille in the ante-chamber. About eight o'clock the groom of the chamber brought in a letter with a big black seal. We at once took it for granted that the King's death was certain—we all laid down our cards,—the matadores got mixed,—we looked at them with contempt. Herr von Brand rose, took his hat, and said,—"I will be the first to address the Princess as Queen, and I will summon up all my powers of eloquence to pronounce the words, Your Majesty, truly majestically." We then stepped softly towards the door of the closet, which had been left open whilst the Princess was reading her letter. But she read at the same time what was passing in our minds, and inquired, not without surprise, what was the reason why we had put a stop to our game. We had not much to say in reply, and she made rather merry at our confusion. We were joked about it again at supper, and I could not help remarking aloud, that if the sick person knew all this he would be not a little

edified. Towards the close of the repast we became very merry, and the Princess was in high spirits. About midnight she rose from table, and we all went to our rooms.

'Silver at Rheinsberg being much less plentiful than gold, I had taken the precaution of bringing a supply with me, and before going to bed I not only emptied my purse, but I counted out upon my table about the worth of a *louis d'or* to pay some gambling debts; whereupon I put out my light and fell quietly asleep.

'But my slumbers were not of long duration. I was awakened about two in the morning by the trampling of several horses crossing the wooden bridge at full gallop. I started up and put my head out of bed. But my room being quite dark, and the house continuing quiet, I resolved to lie still below the blankets. In a few minutes, however, I heard the voice of Baron Knobelsdorff, who pushed open the door of my room calling out,—"Quick! Bielfeld, get up! The King is dead. Willich has come from Potsdam and brought the Princess the news." I expressed some doubts concerning the accuracy of the intelligence, as we had been entertained with the like of it several times, but he replied, "No, no! the thing is sure and certain, he is dead and quite dead. Jordan* has got orders to open the body and embalm it. You know well enough that whoever once gets into *his* hands does not come back again." I could not help laughing at this, and begged Knobelsdorff to get me a light. He tried to find one himself, but in the dark he ran against my table and knocked it over, and sent all my change flying through the room. The light came. I jumped out of bed and was going to pick up my silver, but he stopped me, saying, "Is this a time to think of such things? To be picking up half pence when it is about to rain ducats!" However, I did gather together my

* Not the Abbé, of course; but a relation of his.

money, and then, having thrown on my dressing gown, I went with Knobelsdorff to see Baron Willich. He had already gone up-stairs into the Princess's ante-chamber, where we found him with Frau von Katsch, Fräulein von Schack, and Mistress Bortefeld, her Royal Highness's first waiting-woman. He said he had lost his way in the forest, otherwise he might have been at Rheinsberg by midnight, the King having died at three o'clock in the afternoon, and the new King having despatched him the moment after. He told us the deceased monarch had died both with heroical and Christian steadfastness. . . . We were uneasy only about the best manner of conveying the intelligence to the Queen, who was still fast asleep. Frau von Katsch, who, for the extreme joy she felt, did not in the least lose her dignity of carriage or her presence of mind, charged Mistress Bortefeld with this commission and instructed her how to perform it.

'Mistress Bortefeld accordingly went into the room where the Princess was sleeping, and very softly drew back the curtains of the bed. The Princess awoke, caught sight of her, and inquired what she wanted. Mistress Bortefeld replied,—"I most humbly beg your Majesty's pardon for coming earlier than usual." "But why do you call me Majesty? Are you dreaming?" said the Princess. "No! Madam," replied the other, "but the Baron Willich has arrived—as courier—from Potsdam,—and has brought the tidings—that the King—died yesterday." The Frau von Katsch, who had a sedative powder in readiness, at that moment walked into the room and, having caused her Princess to swallow the powder, she was the first to salute her as Queen. After the lapse of half-an-hour, this incomparable Queen appeared in a black and white dressing gown which displayed infinite taste;—never did she appear to me so beautiful. She gave us permission to enter the audience-

chamber, to receive from us there the first tokens of our homage. Our attestations of sympathy were brief; our felicitations on her Majesty's accession to the throne so much the longer; and from the lively expression of these it was possible to judge with perfect certainty of the emotions of the heart in all those who till then had been devoted to the Prince and Princess more from zeal than self-interest.

'The young Queen acquainted us that she would remove from Rheinsberg and proceed to Berlin forthwith, that she would enter her carriage at ten o'clock, that we should all prepare for our departure, and that she would require eighty post-horses at every station. It was very difficult to bring together so large a number of horses in so small a place, particularly as owing to the long hard winter the country people had used up their fodder and lost a great quantity of their cattle. However, every person in the place being as it were animated with the desire of proving their zeal towards this most gracious and exalted Princess, the post-horses were soon found, and by eight o'clock in the morning everything was ready. Our breakfast was a regular meal and a splendid meal; the cooks had outdone themselves. The *Grande Maîtresse* (Frau von Katsch) called for a large glass, and made bold to propose the health of the new monarch and of the Queen his consort, with the wish that their Majesties' reign might be long and happy. I could not drink this health without shedding some tears, extorted from me by joy and tenderness. I faltered out a few broken words; and this imperfect expression of the emotions of my heart was thought much more eloquent than the most finished compliments would have been. Her Majesty was so gracious as to assure us all that she would continue to honour us with her protection and royal favour. The Herr von Brand offered her his hand

to conduct her to her coach, the ladies followed, and when we had all taken leave of her Majesty at the coach-door, she hastened towards Berlin, and we immediately lost sight of her and her whole suite.'*

Frederick's letter, of which Willich was the bearer, was as follows :—

'*The 31st.*

'MADAME,—God has just disposed of the King this afternoon at half-past three o'clock. He remembered you and drew from all of us tears of genuine compassion. You could not believe with what firmness he died. You will come, if you please, on Wednesday or Thursday to Berlin. Knobelsdorff must go there immediately. We shall stay in our old house. As soon as you arrive you must begin by paying your respects to the Queen, and you will then come to Charlottenburg in case I am there. I have not time to tell you more. Adieu.'†

A second letter, which she, no doubt, found on her arrival, enjoined on her to show the Queen Mother even greater respect than formerly; for the rest to remain in Berlin, where her presence was necessary. Frederick himself had gone to Charlottenburg, where for some time he remained.

* Bielfeld. *Lettres, &c.*, i., pp. 105–115.

† *Œuvres de Frédéric*, xxvi., 12.

CHAPTER XX.

THE KING RETURNS TO RHEINSBERG.

Their Majesties entertain a Circle of Friends—And act the Death of Cæsar—The King suffers from Ague—Charles VI. dies—Masquerading and Mourning—The King makes up his Mind as to proper Measures—The Margravine of Bayreuth thinks Rheinsberg dull—Voltaire pays his first Visit.

Two months after his accession, in August, 1740, Frederick paid a flying visit to Rheinsberg. And in October of the same year the whole Court came thither for a lengthened stay. The King arrived on the 19th, to spend, as he thought, the rest of the autumn and a part of the winter. Within two days he was followed by the Queen and a large and brilliant circle of friends and attendants, including Prince William and the Margrave and Margravine of Bayreuth, &c., all bent on enjoying themselves to their hearts' desire in a pleasant neighbourhood and in delightful society. They were going to have private theatricals; they were going to act Voltaire's 'Death of Cæsar,' Boissy's 'Frenchman in London,' and what not. The great new concert-room was finished, I suppose; a new theatre was to be begun and finished as speedily as possible. The palace itself and all the outbuildings designed for atten-

dants, were so overcrowded that when Bielfeld arrived a few days after the rest he was obliged to put up at the 'Post.' The King was, and for several weeks had been, suffering from his quartan ague, but he allowed it to interfere as little as possible with his enjoyments or those of other people. When the fit came on, 'a mournful stillness reigned' throughout the whole house, but as soon as it had passed off again, his Majesty dined and supped with the Queen and his brother and sister, &c., had a concert in his room, and sometimes in the evening gave a ball. It was the old way of life continued on a grander scale and under the happy auspices of perfect authority. There could be no sort of misgiving in the mind of anybody but that something like this was to be the autumnal *villeggiatura* of the Court of Prussia for long years to come. But the events which happened next not only interfered with present plans, but indirectly caused the stroke to be put through the reckoning of the years to come also.

The news of the death of the Emperor Charles VI. reached Rheinsberg on the 26th of October, just a week after the King's arrival there.

Bielfeld says that he had got up early that morning, and was at breakfast, when he was surprised by a loud knocking at his door. Whereupon there walked into his room the Counts Truchsess and Finckenstein and the Baron Pöllnitz, all looking strangely perturbed. They told him that a courier

had just arrived from the Prussian ambassador in Vienna,* with the intelligence that the Emperor had died on the 20th of the month rather suddenly, 'of an indigestion caused by taking mushrooms too frequently.' The King having a fit of his ague just at that moment, they were at a loss whether to tell

* I suppose Bielfeld is tripping again here. Truchsess could hardly walk into his room on the morning of the 26th. On the 25th the King had written to Truchsess, who was still in Berlin, inviting him to Rheinsberg. The letter (I suppose it is correctly dated) is in the *Politische Correspondenz*, i. 72. The ambassador in Vienna, Herr von Borcke, was the same who had formerly been ambassador in London, (to whom Frederick William sent the commission for 'music in the Scottish gusto.') At a still earlier period he had been sent to Brunswick on the very delicate errand of negotiating the marriage of the Prince Royal. At the court of St. James's he had had to suffer many mortifications, to gratify the ill will of George II. to Frederick William, and in 1728 he had been translated to Vienna. In 1741 Borcke was recalled to Berlin, and appointed a Minister of State in conjunction with, though in reality subordinate to, Podewils. He was also Curator to the Royal Academy of Sciences (which indeed held its sittings in his house), till Maupertuis took upon him the active duties of President. Borcke died in 1747, at the age of forty-three. He is better remembered now in literary than in political history as the earliest German translator of Shakespeare. His version of Julius Cæsar was published in 1741. (I have never seen this translation, but Genée has reprinted the preface to it in his *Geschichte der Shakespeare'schen Dramen in Deutschland*, page 429.) One would like to know a good deal more about Borcke (and some others of the period) than it is easy to learn. The new *Allgemeine deutsche Biographie* does not name him! But there is a notice of him in the *Histoire de l'Académie Royale des Sciences et Belles Lettres*, and also in the first volume of the *Preussische Staatsschriften*, edited by Dr. Reinhold Koser. He belonged, of course, to that most ancient and once most powerful family, the Borckes or Borcks of Pomerania. His daughter became the wife of Maupertuis, whom she outlived by many years. She afterwards became *grande maîtresse* of the court of Princess Amelia.

him or not. On this Bielfeld put on his hat, and they all sallied forth together. The town, as we are already aware, had been burned down in the April previous, and as the four gentlemen were crossing the market-place from the 'Post,' they could not help looking at the ruins, and Count Finckenstein remarked, 'Before we get a new Emperor many a hat will be without a head, and many a town as this is now.'* In the ante-chamber they found Prince William, the courier, and Fredersdorff. Having held a council, the seven agreed not to say anything to the King till the attack had passed, he being already in a profuse perspiration. But in about an hour's time Fredersdorff went into the bedroom, and 'in a gentle and suitable manner prepared his Majesty to read the despatches and to listen to the courier's verbal intelligence.' His Majesty showed not the slightest emotion, but getting up soon afterwards he sent for Eichel, his secretary, and commanded him to write to the Field-Marshal Von Schwerin and Podewils, the Minister of State, requiring their immediate attendance.

These two gentlemen having arrived on the 27th, the King closeted himself up with them for four days, even dining in private with them. When he did at leisure moments show himself to the Court,

* This Count Finckenstein was the first who fell, sword in hand, six months afterwards at the Battle of Mollwitz, April 10th, 1741.

he was as gay and lively as usual. But not only till Schwerin and Podewils* went back to Berlin on November 1st, but also afterwards, he worked hard. Having, of course, to make up his mind what 'attitude' he would take now that the Empire was without a head, he did not surprise people by his working so hard, though he roused their curiosity. 'But it will be a wonder,' writes Prætorius, the Danish ambassador, 'if this Prince, in the present crisis, hits on the most proper measures, as he has no advisers and listens to nobody, but does everything himself, and yet cannot possibly have got the necessary acquirements in so short a time.'†

What the measures actually 'hit on' were, and whether they were the most proper ones or not, we know now. They have made the place in which they were devised in its way very monumental. It is impossible to help quoting here Mr. Carlyle's own words:—

'The resolution Frederick laid before' Schwerin and Podewils, 'was probably the most important ever formed in Prussia or in Europe during that century. . . . resolution . . . which met with little save opposition from all the other sons of Adam, at the first blush and for long afterwards. And, indeed, the making of it good (of it, and of the immense results that hung by it) was the main

* Of Podewils — by far the brightest planet in the political solar system of the time and place—it is only of late that something has begun to be known.

† *Berlinische Monatsschrift* for February and July, 1804.

business of this young King's life henceforth; and cost him Labours like those of Hercules, and was in the highest degree momentous to existing and not yet existing millions of mankind.'*

And this is certainly the occasion on which the destinies of the old Manor House can be held to have culminated—the moment in which it stepped out of private life and took its stand on the stage of universal history. In as far as turning points in the history of the world may be said to localise themselves, Rheinsberg, the point from whence the decision to invade Silesia went forth, must be allowed a supreme place amongst modern historic *châteaux.*†

But, for a while, things there went on strictly according to the programme. In Berlin it was

* Mr. Carlyle. *Hist. of Fred., &c.*, iii., 140.

† The resolution was not, of course, any the less really taken then and there, because, in a contingent shape it had come to life some time before. Frederick himself, wilfully no doubt, lays rather too much stress on the antiquity of his plans in his well-known letters to Algarotti:—'Remusberg, 11 Octobre. Je me retrouve ici chez moi, et plus rendu à moi-même qu'à nul autre endroit. Dès que j'aurai encore fait un voyage à Berlin, je reviens ici pour ne plus quitter Remusberg.' And November 28th,—'Je n'irai point à Berlin. Une bagatelle comme est la mort de l'Empereur ne demande pas de grands mouvements. Tout était prévu, tout était arrangé. Ainsi il ne s'agit que d'exécuter des desseins que j'ai roulés depuis longtemps dans ma tête.' Algarotti had been criticizing the *Anti-machiavel*, and Frederick adds, a little out of keeping with the above:—'La mort de l'Empereur fait de moi un très-mauvais correcteur. C'est une époque fatale pour mon livre, et peut-être glorieuse pour ma personne.'

reported that 'dancing, music, theatricals, and the pleasures of the table followed each other without interruption, that there was revelling till late in the night, people hardly ever separating till four in the morning.' The King's ague diminishing and finally disappearing—put to flight at last by quinine, then a new and desperate remedy—he was socially as charming as possible. The Queen, who received an autograph letter * from her aunt the widowed Empress (after whom she was named), notifying her sad loss, no doubt felt sorry for an hour or two, and answered sympathizingly, but that did not interfere with amusement. On the 7th of November she sends her brother Ferdinand a cheerful account of their way of life :—

'The King still has fever, but it grows less from day to day. With that exception we are enjoying ourselves very much. We have masques and dances, and they act plays. The Tettaus have done very well, Finette particularly has done wonders† . . . The Duke of Holstein,

* The King received a letter from the Grand Duke of Tuscany, the new Queen of Hungary's consort, full of expressions of friendship, and praying for a continuance of the King's friendship in times so full of dangers to the House of Austria. In his reply Frederick at once indicated the terms on which his alliance could be secured; neither hiding his sense of the justice of his own claims on the House of Austria, nor pretending to underrate the value of his friendship. His letter seems to have been lost, but the terms of it 'the cession of a part of our hereditary lands,' are known from Maria Theresa's letter to her ambassador in London (in Arneth, i. 374).

† Mademoiselle Auguste Marie de Tettau, who went by the name of 'Finette,' was during many

Schwerin, Wartensleben, Borck and Buddenbrock, dressed themselves up in female attire at the last masquerade, as old women from the Fishmarket in Berlin. It was enough to make one die of laughing to see them.'

After awhile, the formal official communication having been received, mourning was put on for a month—full mourning, which most likely did check some of the more boisterous modes of enjoyment.*

The Margravine of Bayreuth's account of her visit is not written in her best style. It deals in generalities and is vague. And when she does descend to particulars, she is shockingly inaccurate, not to say contradictory, about names and dates and most other things. She says plainly she did not like Rheinsberg at all, and did not enjoy herself

years a very special favourite at the court of Prussia. She died, after long and severe suffering steadfastly and cheerfully borne, in 1762, at Magdeburg, where the court was seeking refuge from a dangerous episode of the Seven Years' War. There is pathos in Frederick's reply to the Countess Camas, who had sent him notice of the death :—'Vous me parlez de la pauvre Finette. Hélas ! ma bonne maman, depuis six ans je ne plains plus les morts, mais bien les vivants.'

* In Brunswick, of which Duchy both the Empress and the Queen of Prussia were princesses, they had gone into deep mourning at once. The above letter of the Queen's is in answer to one from Ferdinand, in which he, wishing himself at Rheinsberg to see the fun, complains grievously . . . 'we brothers and the Duke have got on weepers. The Duchess, my mother, and my sisters wear crape veils over their faces, and another thrown down behind, and woollen dresses. Liveries, carriages, rooms, everything covered with black, as if we were all going to be buried alive.' This is the future hero of the Seven Years' War ; nineteen years old at the present date. (Von Hahnke ; *Elisabeth Christine, &c.*, 399, 400.)

there. The place itself did not appear to her in the least agreeable, only the good society made it pleasant. Then she says that she saw very little of the King, and when she did see him she had no reason to be pleased with their interviews. 'The greater part of the time,' she says, 'was taken up with constrained civilities or *sanglantes railleries* on the bad condition of the Margrave's finances. Very often he made fun of him outright, and of the other Princes of the Empire, at which I was much hurt.' *

She is merciless to Frau von Morrien (le Tourbillon), and the two charming Demoiselles de Tettau, of whom the Queen writes so kindly, are finished off by the Margravine with touches not easy to reconcile. 'They were both of them,' she declares, 'most amiable, but, by their pitiless satire and scandal-bearing, they made themselves hated by everybody.'

Towards the end of November Voltaire came for a few days. It was the first time he had been in Brandenburg, and for so short a stay the journey was a long and uncomfortable one at that time of the year. Accidents *en route* were not awanting. On the borders of Westphalia his carriage broke down, and he had to mount a restive horse and ride to Herford 'in velvet breeches and silk stockings.'

* The Margrave was received into the fraternity of Freemasons whilst at Rheinsberg, by Frederick and the other Brethren.

His name being demanded at the gate of the town, he 'replied, of course, that it was "Don Quixote," and entered under that name.'

The expectation of such a meteor and its appearance must have made a stir in the party, but of the visit itself there is as good as no record. It is not unlikely that Frederick, as far as his leisure allowed, kept the poet pretty much to himself. The motive for the journey was mainly political. A motive of secondary importance, but still a weighty one in Voltaire's own eyes, was to obtain the payment of several thousand dollars which he made himself out to have spent on the King's account during the negotiations with the Dutch booksellers about the *Antimachiavel.* In the former of the two errands he failed. State secrets were not to be found out, because nobody knew any except the King, who, as he said of himself on another occasion, 'did not tell his secrets'—least of all to Voltaire. In the other errand he succeeded. The money was handed to him, but the King, whilst paying it, seems to have had more than a misgiving that the demand was a 'do.' (The poet's bill was chiefly for travelling expenses in Holland, the present journey to Rheinsberg and back being also charged.) It was most likely the very first cross-light that had fallen athwart the till then so cherished *caractère,* and his Majesty did not care to hide what he thought on the subject. The order to Jordan to pay the money was worded thus:—

'Thy miser shall drink to the lees of his insatiable desire of enriching himself; he shall have the three thousand dollars. He has been with me for six days; that will be at the rate of five hundred dollars (£75) a-day. That is paying dear for a merry-andrew. Never had court fool such wages before.'

By that time Voltaire had gone to Berlin, a few days before the rest of the party, to pay his respects to the Queen mother.

The party at Rheinsberg was broken up at the beginning of December, never again to meet either there or anywhere else. It was the first and last and only time that their Majesties were the host and hostess of a circle of friends in their own house.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE QUEEN.

Queen Elizabeth Christina returns to Berlin for the Winter—She spends the next Summer at Schönhausen—She translates Devotional Books—The King dines with the Queen in the Carnival—They meet for the last Time—Their Happy Years at Rheinsberg.

WHEN the Queen drove away from Rheinsberg that fine June morning, Bielfeld and the rest looking after her as she 'hastened' towards Berlin, she turned her back on her wedded happiness. With the exception just described—those six weeks in the old place in the autumn of the same year—Frederick and she may be said never to have lived together again. In the years to come they were now and then together at Charlottenburg for a few days in summer, to receive guests and do the honours on great official occasions, such as weddings and the like. In winter they were always under the same roof in Berlin for six or seven weeks, but sundered, except for the purposes of representation, as perfectly as though they had lived in different hemispheres. It has generally been supposed, but rashly, I think, that the plan of some estrangement of this sort had been in Frederick's mind from the

beginning. I think it may once have been there, but, if so, it had been put away again. The two had in the meanwhile lived in perfect union at Rheinsberg, and for some months after the Accession there is no trace of distance or of any unnatural relation between husband and wife. It was years before the distance became so great as to be remarked, except by evil-minded persons who were looking for something of the sort and exaggerated what they saw. We observe that the Queen herself was not struck with it for several years. She then, for a time at least, laid the blame on members of the family who were working against her in the dark, and it is very likely that intrigues may have had some hand in the estrangement. The actual separation caused by the first Silesian War, combining perhaps with a misunderstanding, and at last habit and false shame and the impossibility of ever owning oneself to have been in the wrong—all these, doubtless, may have had something to do with it. It is possible that the ill-will at the wife who had been the embodiment or visible substance of a hateful marriage, may, owing perhaps to some slight discord or false report, have come to life again, if but for a moment. In that moment a direction may have been taken, and the direction is all-important in the case of those who cannot turn aside from the given line. In all which we do not find an excuse for Frederick;—alas, one feels that it would be wrong even to look for one.

A few weeks after the accession, Schönhausen was given to the Queen as her private property. It was then, and to some extent is still, a pleasant country house with pretty grounds only a few miles from Berlin. Once an electoral shooting-lodge, it had been enlarged and improved by old King Frederick I., of sumptuous memory, who, in the summer evenings about the beginning of the eighteenth century, used to sail thither with his whole Court in gondolas on the Panke and the junction canal.*

The philosophical Sophia Charlotte lived a good deal at Schönhausen in her early electoral days. Queen Elizabeth herself had been there as Princess Royal, and had at once taken a fancy to the place. And after it became her own she seems to have lost no time in taking possession. She inaugurated her residence on the 28th of August, 1740, with a grand concert. (Of which I will only note that amongst the guests present on the occasion were the Duchess of Anhalt-Zerbst, and her young daughter the Princess Sophie of Zerbst, then a girl of eleven, in her after life better known as Catherine II., Empress of Russia.)

From 1834 till 1837, when they ascended the throne of Hanover, the Duke and Duchess of

* Raumer. *Der Thiergarten*, S. 40. The Panke, like the other waters that flow through Berlin, having become pungent in its odours, is not so inviting now for boating parties, courtly or other, in the summer evenings.

Cumberland lived at Schönhausen. Now it is quiet enough and very sombre. The grounds being so shady and cool, and so near town, the good folks of Berlin go there in crowds on Sundays. But the House, with the grass growing up to its very walls and doors, far from being any longer the centre point of its own grounds, has taken itself out of sight into a corner, where it is screened off by great trees; and there it stands silent and forgotten,—a House out of place and somehow very like the emblem of a Life out of place. A wayward fancy might say that the silence was not the natural reaction from the boisterous and unruly noise that ought to fill every human dwelling some time or other, but rather the deepening of a bygone silence; that of those who walked softly, and crushed down their feelings, and during a long lifetime smothered their wishes. The house is kept in perfect repair, thoroughly well plastered and white-washed, but the doors and thresholds have the look of disuse. Upstairs, in one of the rooms, there are still some views of Rheinsberg—memorial views of a happier place and better days. I was struck with one, in particular, of the terrace by the lake and a gay throng of finely-dressed persons posing conventionally;—all portraits very likely.

After the Seven Years' War the Queen was forced completely to refurnish and re-adorn Schönhausen, it having been entirely laid waste by the Russians or Austrians (I forget which) in 1760. They smashed

the furniture, porcelain, &c., hacked the pictures, and *tortured* (I do not know how) some servants to make them give up plate, which after all was not there.

There is a fine road leading to Schönhausen, popularly called the 'Schönhausen Avenue.' The trees on either side of it were planted by Knobelsdorff.

Of course this (which is also called *Nieder* or Lower Schönhausen, to distinguish it from another place of the same name at a short distance from it) must not be confounded with Schönhausen in the *Altmark*, the old family estate of the Bismarcks.

This gift of Schönhausen we are not, I believe, in the least to take as an earnest of the coming estrangement. I look on it wholly as a *galanterie*, not unique in similar instances, meant to put at the Queen's disposal a place of which she should be not the mistress only but the proprietor. And in this sense certainly it was accepted. She was delighted with the present. Frederick wrote her a very kind letter from Rheinsberg in the beginning of August, enclosing the title-deeds and wishing her 'a thousand pleasures' from the possession, and ending, 'You will be pleased with me next year. I shall do what I can towards your adorning of it to your liking.' (Alas!)

At that time he had his head full of plans for a summer residence for the Court as such. Rheins-

berg, where they did go, as we know, in the first autumn, was too far out of the way. He talked of building a new palace at Ruppin or Potsdam. Before he could make up his mind, the war broke out, first one war and then another, and they kept him for a long while away from home. These wars, as I have just said, of themselves had something to do with bringing on a habit of living apart. By degrees the plan of a summer residence for the whole Court was dropped. Charlottenburg, finished at last, had become a splendid official summer residence, and was made use of as such on all solemn occasions in the years following. The King made up his mind to have a private country house of his own, and built Sans Souci. There, it was understood that he did not 'represent,' and was not obliged to invite anybody. And by 1747, the year in which Sans Souci was finished, the habit of separation had already become so strong, that Frederick, dreading like death the mere shadow of turning from a *parti pris*, certainly never thought of breaking through it.*

By that time the estrangement had taken the rigid shape that it thenceforth kept. The Queen herself gave up being surprised at neglect. Till then she had perhaps tried to account for it by public events, the two wars, the King's absences

* Sir Andrew Mitchell, who had had opportunities of observation and experience, wrote home on one occasion :—'Such is the nature of the King of Prussia, that when he has once taken a thing wrong, He only that made him can set him right.

and constant journeys, his having so much to think about and to do. She lived during the greater half of the year in the huge old Palace in Berlin, and went for the summer months to Schönhausen. She was all along the head and centre of the Court, and received the honours due to her rank from natives and foreigners. It was well understood that the King would not have borne with the smallest slight put upon the Queen; and, indeed, nobody that ever I heard of (except some opera singers once, who were forthwith smartly pulled up for their impudence), did ever dream of forgetting what was due to her. A good many persons, Valori the French ambassador for one,* soon found out that his Majesty's indifference was more apparent than real —was, in fact, affectation—and that it flattered him when foreign Courts showed her attention.

Queen Elizabeth Christina never travelled. Only two or three times in the course of the Seven Years' War, she fled to Magdeburg. Sans Souci *she never saw!* She once went to Potsdam, convoying her mother, the Duchess of Brunswick, who had been in Berlin on a visit and was going home, but, the King being in the wars at the time, she would not take advantage of his absence to look at Sans Souci. Frederick is said to have been once at Schönhausen, in 1744, at a *fête* given by the Queen on the occasion of Princess Ulrique's wedding, but even this

* *Mémoires des Négociations du Marquis de Valori,* tome ii., p. 7, &c.

wants confirmation. In winter he always came to Berlin for the Carnival, and then their Majesties met officially on all occasions of ceremony, at drawing-rooms, balls, &c., or when the King dined with the Queen and bowed low to her in coming in and going out, without saying anything. Her income was a narrow one. When she asked the King to add to it, he refused; but when she fell into debt and asked him to pay her debts, he did so. Still she was very charitable, and gave away a great deal of money to the poor. One is at a loss to know whether it was altogether from motives of necessary economy, or what else, that her entertainments were so scanty that the guests learned to feed themselves before they went. The story has often been repeated of the old *Maréchale* de Schmettau's getting nothing but some cherry jam for her supper one evening, though the Queen had given special directions to the attendants to see that the *Maréchale* was well cared for.

The Queen was very devout, and she had also a literary turn. She translated a great many religious books from German into French, and published her translations. Once, or perhaps twice, she even wrote a thin volume 'all out of her own head,' as the children say.* Her life, though monotonous,

* It is believed that Frederick did not read his wife's writings; no copies of any of them were found amongst his books. Otherwise she was fond of sending them to her friends and relations. She dedicated one to her sister, Queen Juliana of Denmark.

might have been a happy life, but for the longing hid in her secret soul after the society of the husband whom she had learned to love. He all along was fond of seeing what he called 'une douce société' about him now and then. His sisters, and even foreign princesses, often stayed with him for many days at a time at Potsdam. What the wife who would have liked to be there too thought at being left out for a whole lifetime, we can guess;* there were few to whom she could speak her mind. In 1748 she writes to her brother Ferdinand:—

'According to the description that has been made me of the play-room at Potsdam, it must be very fine. Happy they who can be there! But it would not be all the splendour that would tempt me, but the dear master who inhabits the place. Why must it be that all has changed, and that I have lost the former *bontés et grâces?* I still think with pleasure of the time at Rheinsberg, where I enjoyed perfect happiness, being kindly treated by a master whom I cherish and for whom I would lay down my life. But what regret do I not feel now that all is changed! But my heart will never change; and I shall always be the same to him, and I will always hope that all will yet be different. . . . . May the Supreme Being preserve the dear King to us in perfect health!'†

* No doubt it was in one way easier for him to invite any other Princess to Sans Souci rather than the Queen, who could only have come *as* Queen—not a guest but the mistress of the house. There was hardly room for her. In later times, when the New Palace at Potsdam was built, for the express purpose of entertaining a greater number of visitors, the separation had become a thing of twenty-five years' standing.

† Von Hahnke. *Elisabeth Christine, Königin von Preussen. &c.*, S. 113.

The King and Queen saw each other for the last time on the 18th of January—Prince Henry's birthday, always a great festival—1785. Immediately after it the King went back to Potsdam. In the following winter he did not come to Berlin at all. In the summer of 1786, whilst he remained at Sans Souci in declining health, the Queen went to Schönhausen as usual. On the 16th of August she had an evening party. Mirabeau, who was in Berlin that summer, was invited. He had just returned from spending a fortnight at Rheinsberg with Prince Henry; thus it was very natural that at sight of him the Queen should begin to talk about the old place. 'She spoke to me about Rheinsberg,' he says, 'and the happiness she had tasted there when she was Princess Royal.'* It was in that same month just fifty years since she had first gone to live there in the summer of 1736. She did not know, as she was standing talking about it to Mirabeau, that her husband was in his last agony. Frederick the Great died that night—early in the morning of the 17th of August, 1786.

He, too, had been wont to look back on those years at Rheinsberg as on a bright patch of sunshine between two storms; four years in which he had managed to make his own pretty nearly all that mortals ever wish for in their dreams of an ideal existence fashioned after their own fancy for their

* *Histoire secrète de la Cour de Berlin*, Letter XIV.

own enjoyment. In July, 1757, after his defeat at Kollin, and a few days after he had got word of his mother's death, talking sorrowfully of his misfortunes to Sir Andrew Mitchell, he 'said, the happiest years of his life were those he spent at . . . . a house he had given to his brother Henry. There he had retired after his imprisonment, and had remained till the death of the late King, amusing himself with study, and making up for the want of education by reading and conversing with men of taste and sense.' And two years later than this, in November, 1759, after the capitulation of General Finck at Maxen, the King's heart for once failing him, and adversity forcing him like a wounded and weary creature to wail aloud, he seems for one hour to have fed on the illusion (an illusion sent, of course, to stay him in his need) that he would go back and live the morning of his life over again. De Catt says:—

'In the evening I was with the King from half-past three till nine. He was much distressed, always coming back on the same idea, "I have brought my ill-luck with me into Saxony." I tried to turn his thoughts, but this image constantly returned. "See how unhappy I have been! Severely treated by my father. Shut up in a room by myself for three months. At midday my food was handed to me through a small window. At the same time they gave me a shirt. I had only Bossuet on the Variations and Basnage. Misfortune has always pursued me. I have never been happy except at Rheinsberg. Oh! if this peace were to come, could anybody blame me

if I lived to myself a little? if I retired and lived in tranquillity?" '*

In his married life, having sown the wind, he for his own person reaped the whirlwind. I am not thinking of the monkish brotherhood in which he shut himself up, and from which the Faiths and Graces and Charities of womanhood and wifehood were kept aloof; perhaps he liked that. Nor do I mean only the evil rumours that were heaped on him in consequence; perhaps he could and can afford not to mind these. But it neither was nor is a light thing that one of his kingly nature, a man of honour and tenderness such as his, should by his own verdict on himself have always had to stoop to a poor kind of play-acting, whenever the nearest relationship in life was concerned. Whatever he may have thought at one time, throughout the latter half of his life his regard for the Queen was firm and high,† but it was just then that he could in no wise bring himself to show it to her or the world. Year by year he must needs seem less and less aware of her existence.

* The incongruities of extreme grief sometimes provoke a smile, even in the sympathizing bystander; he not having partaken of the suffering which has fused the most foreign troubles into one whole sorrow. Bossuet on the Variations, and the Capitulation of General Finck, were both of them, sure enough, each in its own time and place, very real misfortunes.

† Her name does not occur at all in the *Disposition testamentaire* of 1741; but in the Last Will and testament of 1769 there is a warm eulogium of her.

As one instance out of many, wishing in 1762 to send her a present of porcelain from Meissen, he could only do so by writing a long letter to the Countess Camas, and mentioning in it, as it were *en passant*, that he had ordered 'some porcelain for Schönhausen.' The old Countess in her reply returned the 'thanks of Schönhausen,'—the Queen and she being both of them at Magdeburg at the time!*

* *Œuvres, &c.*, xviii., 149–50. The above is the letter in which he says that he has nothing left but 'l'honneur, la cape, l'épée, et de la porcelaine.'

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

THE Epitaph partly quoted at page 17 is as follows :— (The reader must picture to himself the figure of a closed door, over which the inscription runs from top to bottom in large italics.)

Oh Vous dont les Cendres sont confondues,
Parents chéris, Amis constants, Serviteurs fidèles,
c'est
à Votre Mémoire
que je consacre ce Monument.
La Mort ne considère ni rang ni sexe ni âge,
et celui qui survit à tant de pertes
n'a que la douce consolation du souvenir.

Passant !

qui que tu sois,
verse quelques larmes à côté de ce Tombeau !
Existe-t-il un cœur
qui ne regrette un Objet qui lui fut cher,
ou qui ne songe
qu'un jour
la sombre tristesse
viendra l'envelopper de son voile funèbre ?

1790.

THE COUNTS OF LINDOW.

THESE Counts of Lindow from first to last seem to have been a most remarkable race. High-hearted, highly cultivated, royal in their bearing, incapable apparently of guile or treachery, or of the brutalities found in all classes in those rough times, one after another they distinguished themselves as statesmen, as men of letters (one of them wrote Latin poetry), now and then as warriors, and occasionally as Churchmen. One of the earliest of them, also a Wichmann, leaving his brother to rule, became a monk and founded a monastery, of which, of course, he rose to be Prior. He left his mark so deep in the Dominican annals, that in after centuries a whole host of legends gathered round his name;—some of which stories of Friar Wichmann are picturesque. The intensely aristocratic bearing of the family was the chief cause of its decline. As is mentioned in the text, they intermarried only with reigning houses—counting, no doubt, on winning their own way sooner or later to the full privileges of that standing,—and the large dowries they were forced to give to their daughters, very soon told on their finances and at last brought them into very real straits. As a consequence, they taxed their subjects more heavily than could well be borne, and thus, what would otherwise seem strange, they lost the affection of the people and became actually unbeloved. And this, although some of them individually were distinguished for their benevolence. Of one, Count Ulrich IV., who

died in 1420, it is related that he was so bountiful to the poor, that in life his motto was :

> Hew ich Gelt, so mütt ich gewen
> Andern lüden ock to lewen,
>
> (Have I money, I must give
> To other folks that they may live,)

and at his death he left the monks the right of fishing in the lake (liberam capturam piscium in stagno prope oppidum). The chronicler relates that the Counts oftentimes caused the councillors and chief citizens of New Ruppin, with their wives and families, to be invited to the Castle at Old Ruppin, but though they did erect May bowers, and entertain the people with music and dancing and victuals and drink, and were most loving and condescending, yet could they never gain their affections; the burghers and councillors were always in all things contrary to their lords, the Counts. (Which picture of garden-parties of the fifteenth century, given by the people at the great House to put their small neighbours in good humour, and make them submit more readily to taxation, has a touch of human nature in it, I think.) The great tournament held at Ruppin in 1512, during the minority of the last Count, a tournament which has been often described, seems to have given the *coup de grâce* to the finances. The Elector and Electress came, also the Elector of Mayence and a host of Dukes and Prelates, and the festivities, which were splendid, drained the Ruppin exchequer to the dregs and left a heavy debt. Things had come to such a pass that when poor Wichmann was seized with his mortal illness, and wanted to send to Berlin for a doctor, he was told there was no money to pay the doctor! There was no doctor in Ruppin. The servants heated the room as hot as the sick man could bear it, and gave him wine and mead,

and in a few hours he was dead. Even at the time this treatment seems to have been disapproved of. The monks sang in the streets the following ditty, which gives a touchingly rude picture of the catastrophe :—

Wil gy hören, wie das geschach.
Allwo der edle Her üm syn Leben ward gebracht,
Der edle Landesherre.
Der edle Her Wichmann zog jagen aus,
Eine falsche Fraw liess er zu Hauss
Mit ihren vergüldeten Ringen.
Er sprach : Kersten, lieber Jäger mein,
Mir ist von Hertzen also weh, mir ist so weh,
Ich kan nicht länger reiten.
Sie machten ihm eine Stube also heiss,
Und darin ein Bette so weich,
Darin sollte der Herre ruhen.
Sie schenckten ihm Wein und auch die Mede,
Das nahm dem edlen Herrn syn Leben,
Dem edlen Herrn Wichmanne.
Er sprach : Hätte ich Pferde und Wagn,
Die zu dem Berlin wollten eingahn,
Die mir wollten Apothecker und Aertzte holen.
Allthohand sprach der Rothbart :
Wenn solchem Herrn ein Finger weh thut,
So sol man Apothecker und Aertzte holen.
Auch sprach der Graubart :
Hier ist kein Geld zu dieser Fahrt,
Womit wollen wir die Aertzte lohnen ?
Er sprach : Schickt zu Ruppin in meine liebe Stadt,
Da haben mein Freund einen verborgenen Schatz,
Sie werden mir hundert Gülden senden.
Ach Fräulein Plöne, liebe Schwester mein,
Möchtestu hier in meinem Letzen seyn.
Das Land Ruppin das solt dein seyn.
Ach das ich von euch scheiden sol,
Das macht der bitter Tod,
Wie gern ich wolt euch noch zu Troste leben !
Bartholomaeus lieber Landreuter mein,
Steck in mein Mund ein Tüchelein,
Und kühl doch meine Zunge !—

Als der Her verschieden was,
Da weinte Alles, was auf dem Hause was
Wo das befroden kunte.
Sie legten ihn auf ein beschlagnen Wagn,
Sie führten ihn zu Ruppin in seine Stadt,
Sie begruben ihn in das Closter.
Sie schossen ihm nach sein Helm und Schild.
Da sprach die alte Gräfin: o weh, mein liebes Kind,
Das ich hier die letzte bin.

At the time of Wichmann's death the only surviving members of the family were his two sisters and the widow of his granduncle (not his grandmother, as some say: his mother and grandmother were dead, and his *step*-grandmother had married again and left the place). The sisters married in due time and went away. The old grandaunt, who figures as 'the last' in the ballad, the Countess Anna, called Jacobina, outlived Wichmann by two years, sitting very desolate in the deserted castle at Old Ruppin. When she had been laid beside the rest of the ancient race, the family vault was walled up.

(The best account of the House of Lindow is in Riedel.)

END OF VOL. I.

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